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Harvey's got something to say
BIG INTERVIEW INSIDE
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"GUESS WHAT, TRENT..."

It was the news every team-mate of James Milner – and everyone with a Red heart – wanted to hear: he's signed a contract extension. The vice-captain is set to remain with the Reds for a further season having agreed fresh terms beyond the expiry of his previous deal this summer. Manager Jurgen Klopp couldn't hide his delight: "It's important for us – all of us. A lot is often made of James' leadership skills and his influence in the dressing-room, and of course that's correct, but nobody should overlook his quality on the pitch where he continues to perform to a level that meant we simply couldn't afford to lose him. So I'm grateful he answered the call and agreed to give us the extra year. More to come."

HAPPY 130TH BIRTHDAY TO US!

As if the season wasn't exciting enough, Liverpool Football Club has now turned 130 years old and the celebrations have only just started. Way back on 3 June 1892, the government's Board of Trade issued a certificate confirming that Liverpool FC formally constituted a company and could now trade under the leadership of John Houlding, the owner of Anfield, and key figures such as John McKenna and William Barclay. The rest is history and a grand total of 50 major honours have now been secured by the men's team, with two added in the past 12 months: the Carabao Cup and Emirates FA Cup.

From this June and throughout the coming year LFC is planning a number of events to mark the anniversary along with a 130th commemorative club crest. There is a countdown of the club's 130 greatest goals – chosen and ranked in terms of their quality, importance, iconic status and lasting legacy. And Liverpool Legends on 130: in conjunction with former players association Forever Reds, a tribute to all things Liverpool FC as told by some of our greatest-ever players, including Sir Kenny Dalglish, Phil Thompson, John Barnes, Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher, plus current boss Jürgen Klopp. There is a 130 animation retelling of the LFC story through the eyes of a young child who travels back in time to retrace his family's Red heritage; and The Ken Hirst Story – a film about Anfield's oldest registered season-ticket holder.

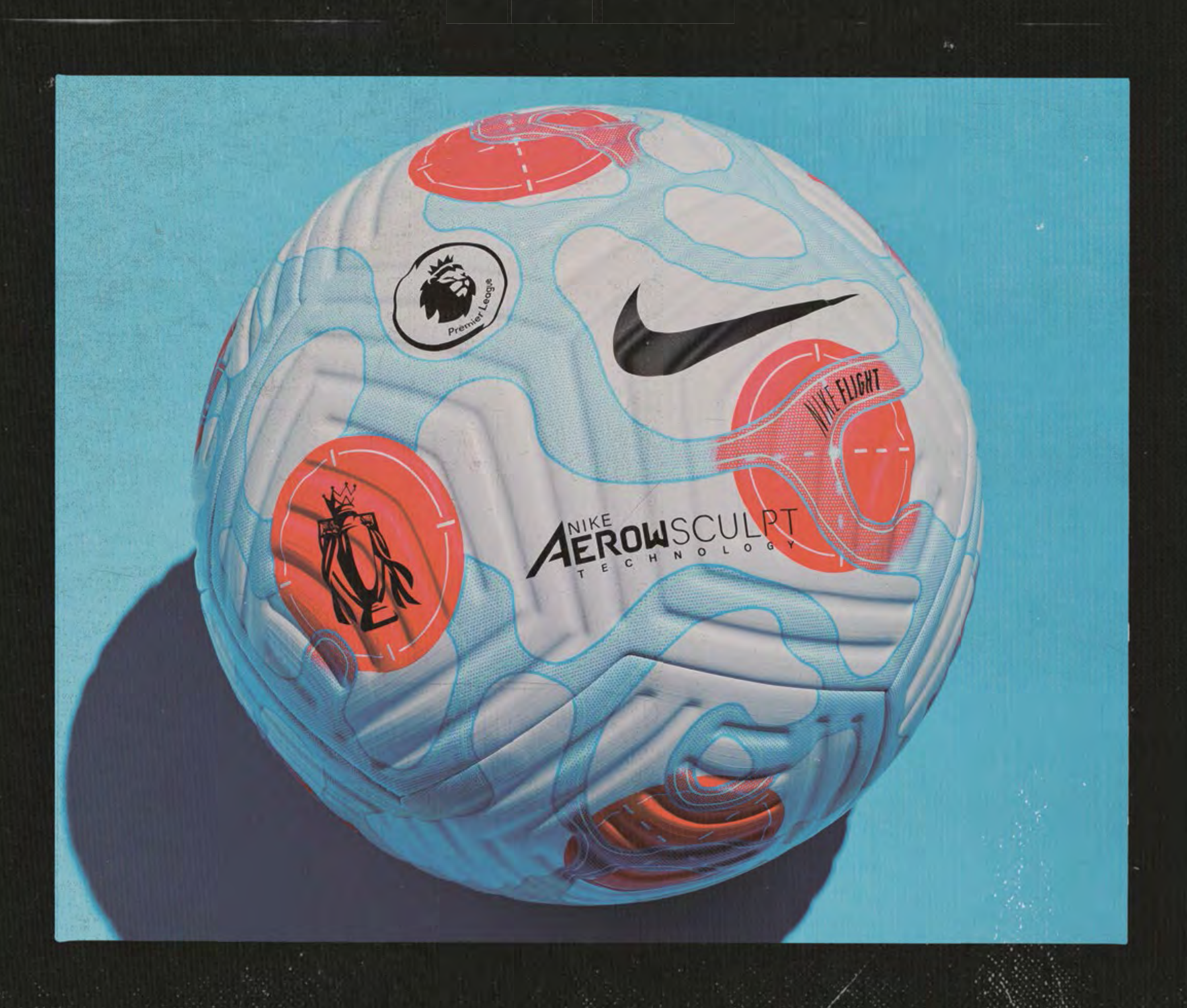
The club's community programme, Red Neighbours, has also devised a series of 130-themed physical-activity plans to be rolled out across their regular exercise programmes in the communities of Anfield and Kirkby.





Mané
Minamino
Oxlade-Chamberlain
Adrián
Thiago
MANÉ
10
MINAMINO
18
CHAMBERLAIN
15
ADRIAN
13
6
NEVER
WALK
WALK ALONE
1892

MEET THE NEW NIKE FLIGHT BALL





'CAN I HAVE YOUR SHIRT?' BANNERS REACH A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

CORNER TAKEN QUICKLY



Just like Barcelona in 2019, the page where you don't know what to expect...

Catching some rays/roys/reys/riys XI

RAY Clemence
Jose Miguel Gonzalez REY
David MurRAY
Sam RAYbould
RAY Lambert
ROY Evans
RAY Kennedy
Frank GRAYer
ROY Saunders
RAY Houghton
AndRIY Voronin

HOW TO ANNOUNCE SIGNING A NEW CONTRACT

"So you're stuck with me for another season then..." James Milner on Instagram

OUR LADS HAVE COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE

Trent Alexander-Arnold/Curtis Jones (Liverpool, United Kingdom)

With a population of 2.24 million, Liverpool is the fifth-largest metropolitan area in the UK and the best city in the country. The city's two football clubs, Liverpool and Everton, have won 28 league titles and six European Cups between them.

Founded in 1207, Liverpool originally had seven streets that were said to have been designed by King John and were set out in the shape of a letter H. One of those streets, Chapel Street, is now home to Liverpool FC's offices including the LFCTV studios, while another, Dale Street, has got some great hospitality.

The River Mersey was significant in Liverpool replacing Chester as the main port city in the North West and thus attracted immigrants and visitors from all over the place. Scandinavian sailors brought with them a stew called lapskaus, which became known as lopscouse, which was shortened to scouse. See what happened there?

The Scousers in our team are Trent Alexander-Arnold and Curtis Jones and, like loads of other Scouse lads, they're dead good at footy. They play for the most successful club in the country with Liverpool FC – formed 130 years ago – the first to win 50 major honours.

Boss tha…

BLAGGING IT

One of these facts about Luis Diaz's canine is true, the other two are made up. Chew it over and see if you can dig out the right answer...

- ***Luis Diaz's dog is called Andrea Pirlo***
- ***Luis Diaz's dog is called Carlos Valderama***
- ***Luis Diaz's dog is called Toni Kroos***

Answer: For reasons we don't yet know, Luis Diaz's dog is called Toni Kroos after the Real Madrid midfielder. You'd have thought fellow Colombian Carlos Valderrama was more likely, but it's defo Toni Kroos. Andrea Pirlo was another red herring, and would work for a dog of both sexes, but it's still Toni Kroos.

RANDOM CHANT OF THE MONTH

***We've won the Cup,
We've won the Cup,
Ee-aye-addio,
We've won the Cup***

Most LFC appearances 2021/22

1 Jordan Henderson	57
2 Diogo Jota	55
3 Alisson	54
4 Sadio Mane	51
5 Mo Salah	51
6 Virgil van Dijk	51
7 Fabinho	48
8 Trent Alexander-Arnold	47
9 Andy Robertson	47
10 Joel Matip	43



THE MOMENT CALVIN HARRIS THOUGHT 'YOU DON'T SEE THAT IN IBIZA'




We love you
ALLEZ LES ROUGES
LFC
FA CUP WINNERS
1986
1989
FA CUP

Liverpool we do

Happy Reds on parade with trophies onboard and vast numbers to welcome them back – we could get used to this



Maybe it’s something about the setting, especially the last leg along The Strand, Liverpool’s old Dock Road, with the sun peeping through the late-May clouds and sparkling on the waterfront, the fireworks exploding atop iconic buildings and the red sea of supporters lining the pavements. No city does a homecoming parade better, and to think it was less than 24 hours after the trauma of the Champions League final in Paris.

Previously City mayor Joanne Anderson had invited the club to take part in a parade, but following a second Wembley triumph it was extended to include the Emirates FA Cup in addition to the Carabao Cup. It began at 4pm the day after the Reds played Real Madrid and also included a bus with players from Liverpool FC Women who’d won the FA Women’s Championship.

As the date of the parade fell on the anniversary of the Heysel Disaster, throughout the morning LFC, supported by Liverpool City Council, paid tribute to the 39 supporters who lost their lives on that day. The 13.5km route, the same as the 2019 parade, started at Allerton Maze in the south of the city and ended along The Strand.

Social media was awash with sensational footage and the players weren’t slow to show their appreciation. Midfielder Thiago tweeted: “Speechless. What a club. What a city.” Bobby Firmino posted: “I’ll never forget this day.”

From goalkeeper Adrian: “I’ll never delete this [video].” And full-back Kostas Tsimikas: “This club is different.” And from Big Virg, simply: “ I love my club!”

JORDAN HENDERSON: “It’s incredible! We weren’t quite sure what to expect when we came on the bus. Obviously we are disappointed with last night and how the season ended, but overall the lads have given everything and this is what it means to the fans.

“I think it’s the least we can do to say thank you to them for what they’ve given to us this season, supporting us across the country and across Europe, so we say thank you and it means a lot to the lads.








CARVERY
JURGEN
CREAM OF
THE KOP
MO
ANOTHER WONDER
OF THE WORLD




Carabao ENERGY DRINK

"We weren't sure what it was going to be like after last night and we were all disappointed, a bit flat as you can imagine. But this is what it's all about. This is why you do it and who you do it for – the fans. To see them out like this is incredible.

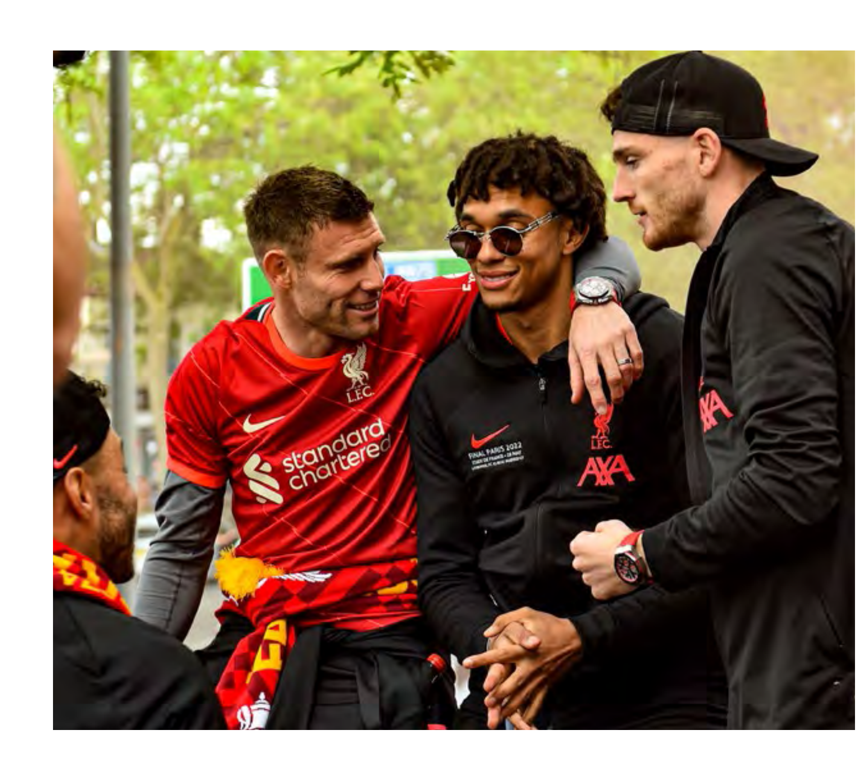
"There are fine margins in football and that's the way it is. I suppose you could say we got a bit lucky in the other two finals with the penalties – luck was on our side – but with the Premier League and the Champions League it wasn't. That's football. You've got to take it as it is and we can still learn a lot from this season.

"It has been an incredible season, we gave absolutely everything and the lads can be proud of what they've done. Hopefully we can use it to go even better next year.

"I think we've been taken for granted a little bit because of the consistency and because we were challenging for all four. In the end we only came away with two when we would like to have come away with one or maybe two more, but you can't always win them all.

"We'll keep trying again next year, but this is what it's all about. To enjoy this with the fans...we missed this a few years ago when we won the league so to spend this time with the fans now is really special.

"I need a break, but I think we all need a break just to recharge the batteries, switch off for a little bit and spend time with the family. But after a few weeks we'll start itching to get back and hopefully when we come back for pre-season we'll be raring to go again."







THIS FEELING IS AMAZING, TO COME OUT AND CELEBRATE WITH THE FANS, OUR FAMILIES, OUR FRIENDS, YOU'VE GOT TO CELEBRATE THESE MOMENTS

ANDY ROBERTSON: "To be honest with you, I woke up this morning in a terrible mood, everyone did. Obviously we were so disappointed with what happened last night and we were dreading the parade a bit, but the minute you get on this bus you realise the best fans in the world have come out.

"It has lifted the spirits for all of us and it will give us a nice ending to a really tough season. We move on to next season but this experience we get will mean everything to us.

"You want to win the big finals and when you don't do that then you worry about how you will be received, what will go on and how many people will show up, so of course that was in the back of all our minds. But my God, what a turnout. Like I said, the best fans in the world. They gave us something today to be happy about and to represent them, for all of us, is the biggest honour.

"It's been a long, tough season for us but also for them in terms of how far they have travelled, how much money they have spent travelling, every game. Sixty-three games, home and away, sold-out. You kind of appreciate them more and it's more just a thank-you to them more than anything."

TRENT ALEXANDER-ARNOLD: "It was hard to gauge how this was going to go today but I think the fans here, it's been outstanding so you get into the mood of it and it's been an amazing turnout.

"It's been an unbelievable season that's ended in a bit of disappointment, but in the grand scheme of things we got two trophies. At the start of the season if you'd said we'd get those two trophies I think everyone would have said yeah, okay, so we're proud of how far we've come and proud of ourselves no matter what.

"It's still two trophies. We've missed out on two trophies at the very end which, you know, puts a little bit of a downer on things, but at the end of the day we've still got two trophies out of four that were available, which is more than any other English team. So we've got to be proud of ourselves and we're happy with the season.

"You can never get used to winning trophies. This feeling is amazing, to come out and celebrate with the fans, our families, our friends, it's amazing. We can't get complacent and you've got to celebrate these moments because you never know, we might never win a trophy again. But we are excited today and it gives us motivation to go again.

"There's no doubt that next season we'll have our hands on some trophies again. So it's about enjoying today, getting some rest in over some and coming back to win more trophies next year.

"It's been a long season with a lorra lorra games and it's all been worth it, but I'll enjoy the rest."

DIOGO JOTA: "It's amazing, to be honest. I was not expecting this much. Of course after the defeat yesterday it feels sad, but it's impossible to be sad at this moment when we have all these people cheering for you and for the team.

"It's a sad moment for us what happened last night, but if you can think of all the season – [just] four defeats, two trophies – it's an amazing season. Now we can celebrate, although it's hard because of last night.

"This season was an outstanding one, we did a great job. But I think about improvement and if we can do it next season it will be great."

IBRAHIMA KONATE: "It's unbelievable, it's crazy, I never saw this in my life! I don't want to talk too much because I want to enjoy it now!"

ALEX OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN: "It's pretty special, but it would be nice if Trent actually waved back every now and again – I've never seen a ruder Scouser in all my life! But other than that we're having a great time and they [LFC fans] are a special bunch of people.

WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, NO CLUB IN THE WORLD – THAT THEY LOSE THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL THE NIGHT BEFORE AND THE PEOPLE ARRIVE HERE IN THE SHAPE THEY ARE, THE MOOD THEY ARE. ABSOLUTELY OUTSTANDING. THIS IS THE BEST CLUB IN THE WORLD – I DON'T CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK!



"I know we've done it before, but it's special every time. It's amazing. Every sort of 15 minutes I'm just getting a grab on the shoulder from Milly and I know that's him saying, 'Soak it in – just take it in, don't get bored of it'. He's been around the block, he's done it all, so that's where we're at.

"He drinks orange juice and I can't say the same for myself today, but we're having a great time and he's having a great time on the orange juice and that's all that matters!"

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "Without a shadow of a doubt, no club in the world – this world – that they lose the Champions League final the night before and the people arrive here in the shape they are, the mood they are. Absolutely outstanding. This is the best club in the world – I don't care what other people think!

"I wasn't sure what we could expect. We spoke about it before, 'What do we do?' You have to plan this kind of thing. You can't just decide to have a parade. But I hoped, really deeply, that we find something like this, it's absolutely incredible.

"That's the biggest sign you can give to the world. Yes, we won two

competitions, great, but we didn't win the last two – and these people don't forget, they know exactly what a shift the boys put in. Absolutely incredible. It's such a boost for everything that will come. Unbelievable.

"I'm proud of the players but I'm proud of these people, to be honest. Unbelievable. Yesterday in the stadium some things happened that nobody understood, our families were in trouble, all these kinds of things. Now we come here and see this, when you see the eyes of the people, it's incredible.

"That's the best sign you can get: you don't have to win, you just need to put all what you have in, really throw everything on the pitch and the people of Liverpool love you. We celebrate life, we celebrate the season, we celebrate our competitions and we celebrate the championship [2020]. That's how it is.

"At the best I'm not sure it's a rollercoaster, I would have had no problems with winning the last two competitions as well! It's an unbelievable season. What the boys did is unbelievable, what the coaches did is unbelievable. The concentration we kept up, the level we kept, unbelievable. All good, but now I am on holiday! I am on holiday now. I love you all!"



PEP LIJNDERS: "It's insane, no? We see the Scouse soul today, there's something bigger than us and the people are proud. When you lose, I think that's the next level. What a season, hey.

"This is the best remedy, to see your family after the game immediately if you lose and see all the fans with this pride – that's the best remedy for losing a game like that. Overall we just have to be proud and that's the feeling we have; the feeling that we can continue with this team to work overrules all the feelings of losing.

"In my next life I will be a fan, for sure. It's insane, I love it, the passion. We have to cherish these moments because being a Liverpool supporter in this moment in this era, with this team, with so much joy in their feet, with so much passion, we have to shout as loud as we can. Enjoy it before it will end."

JOHN ACHTERBERG [GOALKEEPER COACH]: "It's just unreal what this gives to all the players and the coaches. It makes you desperate to win more, really. The enjoyment that the people give to the players and staff is unreal.

"We are one of the best clubs in the world, if not the best. You can see no one can reproduce the support we have. You can see that









everywhere we go and I sometimes get tears in my eyes looking out the bus at the people here. It's mad."

MATT BEARD [WOMEN'S MANAGER]: "A great occasion, a great day. I'm delighted with what we have achieved this year…it's like a family and that is why we have had the success we have had. It's unbelievable, I say it all the time that I have never worked anywhere like it."

TAYLOR HINDS [WOMEN'S DEFENDER]: "It's unreal, the fans are amazing and to be a part of the men's celebrations and to celebrate ourselves as well is just amazing. You can hear it, you can see it, it's just so good to be here."

LIVERPOOL ECHO: "The Strand was again turned red as Liverpool's victory parade made its way down the city's famous waterfront…

"Red smoke clogged the air as supporters celebrated a fine campaign for the club. The Reds won the League Cup and FA Cup – as well as finishing second in the Premier League – But despite the disappointment in Paris, supporters still turned out in their thousands to ensure their side received a hero's welcome – as well as celebrating the title winning achievement of the club's Women's side…

"Liverpool's players and staff were greeted by wild scenes as they made their way into the city centre. Dua Lipa's One Kiss played over the speakers as players, staff and fans danced and enjoyed the moment. Fireworks were also let off as red confetti was fired into the air."

BBC SPORT: "It's been an attack on the senses. The smell of the pyro, the noise of the music, the sound of emotional voices and the sight of teams with trophies.

"Fireworks flashed off from the buildings that make up Liverpool's waterfront and confetti cannons turned the air red. People stood on traffic-lights. People stood on road signs. Kids sat on the shoulders of dads.

"Memories were being created wherever you looked and hopefully, there were kids out there who will fall in love with all the joy football can bring.

"The players were absolutely loving it and in truth, whoever you support, football is pretty magic, isn't it?"


L.F.C.
PARIS FINAL 2022
PARIS FINAL 2022
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FINAL PARIS 2022
STADE DE FRANCE – 28 MAY
LIVERPOOL FC VS REAL MADRID CF
JK

"I SEE US COMING AGAIN"

A little down, yes, but not for long – already in his post-final press-conference Jürgen Klopp was looking forward to the Reds in Europe next season




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WE KNOW HOW OFTEN MO SCORED IN THESE SITUATIONS. IT WAS JUST AN OUTSTANDING SAVE FROM COURTOIS, WE HAVE TO RESPECT THAT AS WELL





JÜRGEN, IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE RESULT [TO LOSE 1-0] DESPITE THE PERFORMANCE…

"Yes, true. You're right but I'm not sure it's incredible, it's just a normal football result. After the game when I saw the stats, it was 50-50 possession. We had a lot more shots, a lot more shots on target, but the most decisive stat is absolutely on Madrid's side.

Just to make sure that nobody thinks I wouldn't congratulate Real Madrid, I do that now but I congratulated everybody present and involved outside personally.

"They scored a goal, we didn't, that's the easiest explanation in the world of football and it's hard, harsh to get anyway, but we respect that of course. When the goalkeeper is man of the match then something is going wrong for the other team, so we had I think three really big chances where Courtois made incredible saves. I would have loved to have had a few more of this calibre.

"In the last third we could have done better, a pass here, the crosses, especially towards the end of the game, towards Courtois made not too much sense. We had the best phase probably after they scored the one-nil, then we played immediately exactly in the spaces we had to play.

"In the first half there were good moments, when we found Sadio, next left to right from Casemiro, their centre-halves stayed deep, Sad could turn, arrived in the box. That was good. We wanted to play a bit more in their formation in the second half then around their formation.



"The problem is when you play against Real Madrid and they defend that deep, the counter-pressing, the counter-attacking threat they are is immense. You cannot ignore that. I saw us doing really a lot of good things, to be honest, but it was not enough and we take that."

YOU'VE WON SO MANY GAMES AGAINST DEEP-LYING SIDES THIS SEASON – A LOT OF TEAMS HAVE PLAYED LIKE THAT AGAINST YOU – BUT ON THIS OCCASION DO YOU THINK BECAUSE IT WAS THE 63RD GAME YOU'VE PLAYED THERE WASN'T AS MUCH IN THE TANK?

"Let me say, that doesn't help, but I don't think it was the reason. We all know, the chances we had, when the player shoots a ball, the ball going in or not is on the foot actually only an inch, that's all. Nothing to do with being at the peak of your physical things or not. We had these situations, the chance in the one-on-one situation from close range from Mo, we know how often Mo scored in these situations. It was just an outstanding save from Courtois, we have to respect that as well.

"I think Madrid had one shot on target, is that right? And that was a goal. But, look, I understand 100 per cent and I respect 100 per cent the reason for playing football and having these kinds of competitions is to win the game, and whatever you do – as long as it's in the rules – it's allowed and you can do it, so it's completely fine.

"We had to defend as well in moments, just that we blocked the shots or whatever. We played a good game, but when you lose 1-0 you have to admit it was then not good enough.

"I told the boys in the dressing-room after we had a bit of time obviously watching the celebrations of Real Madrid, I told the boys I feel the pride already. But I saw as well I was the only one in the dressing-room at that moment. The boys need a little bit longer for that, I understand that.

"These boys played an outstanding season. The two competitions we couldn't win, we didn't win for the smallest possible margin – one



point, one-nil. What does that say? [Manchester] City during the season were one point better and tonight Madrid were one goal better. That says nothing about us.

"The difference between 2018 and now is that I see us coming again. In 2018 I wished it but I couldn't know. But these boys are really competitive, they have an incredible attitude, it's a fantastic group and we will go again, definitely. And tomorrow, we will celebrate the season.

"It's good that we don't have to do that now immediately. But after a night's sleep and maybe another talk or speech from me, the boys will realise how special it was what they did. Even if nobody on this planet would understand that we have a parade tomorrow, we still will do it and I really hope that everybody who has the chance to get to Liverpool is there tomorrow and celebrates together with us a fantastic season which we all had together.

"It didn't end like we wanted but yeah, that's facts. But, how I said, the club is in a good moment, we will go again."

WHAT DO YOU THINK TODAY WAS THE KEY BETWEEN WINNING AND LOSING; WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS MISSING FROM TODAY TO GET THE WIN?

"They scored and we didn't. That is now easy to say. We could have played better football but Madrid could have played better football but they didn't and they won anyway.

"I think Madrid played already a lot of games better, we can now say they played exactly like they have to; fine, that's how you play a final. If we didn't want the ball then we would have both played in our halves and that is not possible.

"Again, the stats is 50-50 possession so it was not that they never had the ball, absolutely, but apart from the goal they didn't have a shot on target – that is a good sign for my team. We had nine shots on target, that is really a good number, but the problem is they scored with one shot and we didn't score with nine. That's the difference between losing and winning.

YOUR SEASON HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING, ALMOST PERFECT, AND TONIGHT YOU HAD 24 SHOTS, NINE ON TARGET, WHICH SOMEHOW WASN'T ENOUGH TO WIN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – COULD ANYONE HAVE BEATEN REAL MADRID?

"It's not important if any other team could have won tonight because



Madrid qualified for the final and we qualified for the final and we couldn't win tonight – that's the only thing that counts.

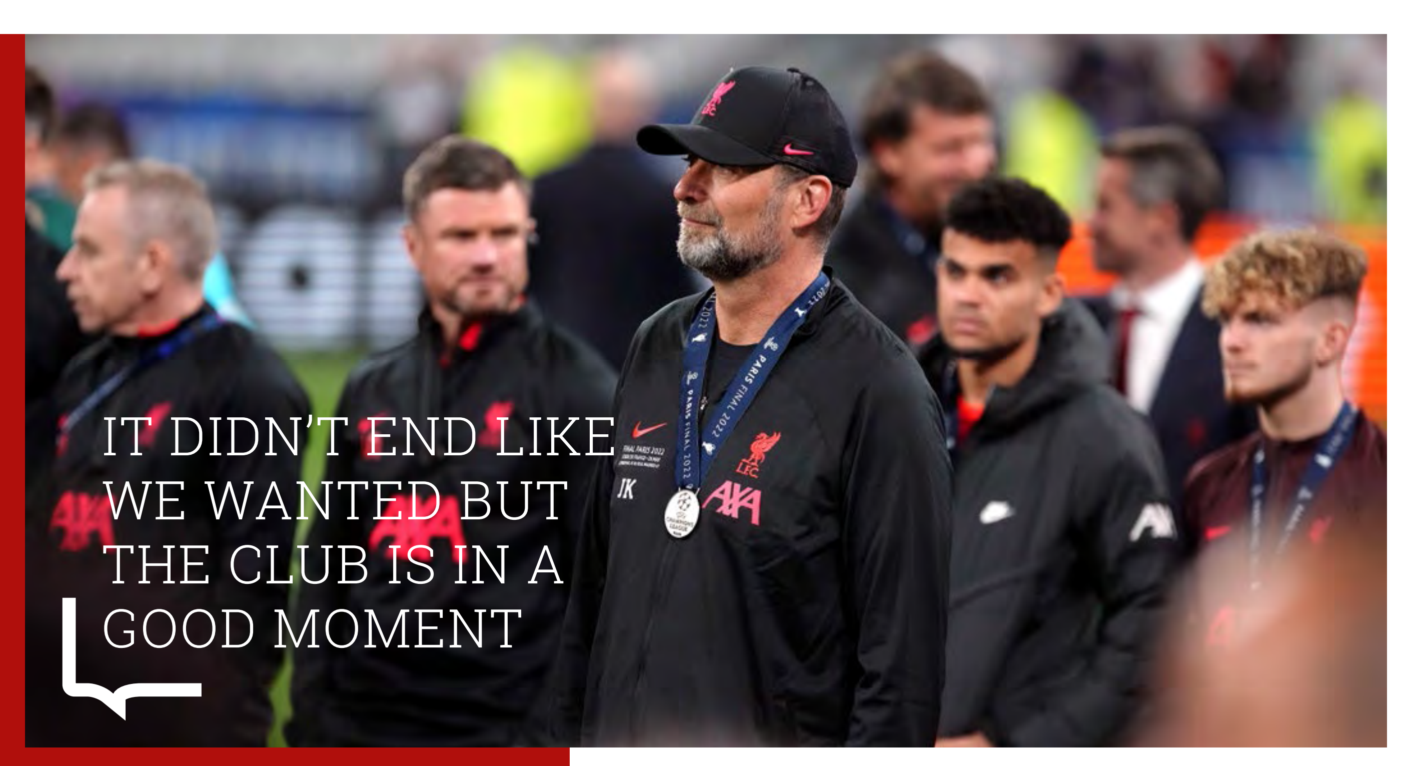
"This team of Real Madrid is incredibly experienced, they have the most experienced manager in European football, now the most successful as well. In a football game, in a close football game and even when we had much more shots than Madrid, it is about scoring, easy.

"Then the other problem is, with 24 shots as you say, I remember three situations where Thibaut Courtois made a proper save, a world-class save, and with our quality we can cause them more problems.

"Madrid deserve the Champions League trophy, that's how it is, when if you lose you have to think you could have done better. That's normal. We think we could have done better.

"Is it possible at game number 63 to play your absolute best football? I don't know, but I saw a lot of good things. My team was full of desire, full of passion, we tried really hard and you don't get the reward. That's part of the game, it will never change.

"What's the reason for that? I don't believe in these kinds of things that Madrid is unbeatable in finals. They will lose a final someday but it didn't happen tonight so I think Real Madrid couldn't care less when that will happen and for us it's not too interesting as well."



IT DIDN'T END LIKE WE WANTED BUT THE CLUB IS IN A GOOD MOMENT


BOSS
BOSS

GET THIS PARTY STARTED

After the season's last game at Anfield, the only place to be was The Olympia where Jamie Webster and Kieo raised the roof on another memorable BOSS Night

Words: Rhys Buchanan; photos: John Johnson

"We've had tougher times than this and we've had worse results than that," explains singer-songwriter Kieo just hours after Liverpool have taken Manchester City to the wire in yet another thrilling and hard-fought title battle. We're in the dressing-room of Liverpool's beloved Olympia Theatre on West Derby Road – and although it wasn't to be after City staged a late turnaround at home to Aston Villa, songs and chants about the Reds still boom heartily through the walls of the backstage area as the BOSS End of Season Party gets underway.

"This is the best Liverpool team we've ever seen and you can't ask for much more than that," he continues. "In terms of tonight and people getting up for it, it's natural, we're really proud of this team and proud to be Liverpudlians, so what else are we going to do?

"We can't look back at this season with any regrets for putting 92 points on the board, getting two huge cups in the bag and making it to the Champions League final next week.

"Today what I really wanted was for Liverpool to win their game and do their job. Again we turned it around and did what we needed. There was a moment before half-time when we were trying too hard and the crowd were really panicking with the realisation we could do this here. We came from behind again and won the game, the players were smiling at the end, we all know the incredible level we're at now going into next season."

As well as a chance to celebrate the team and manager after an incredible season, tonight is a testament to how vital BOSS Night has been on this magical journey – growing from tiny bars to huge venues, the event continues as an unshakable glue between the club and the fans. In the course of just a month, BOSS will stage shows in Reykjavík, Oslo, Liverpool, Paris and Dublin, uniting fans through this great chapter in the club's history. Kieo sees it as a privilege to passionately share the matchday culture he grew up with far and wide.

"We've sung these songs on the terraces for years in Liverpool and the club is getting bigger and bigger, always growing. To be able to go and represent the club in any way shape or form fills me with immense pride. I've seen highs and I've seen lows, but to be part of this and this era is something different.

"BOSS Night isn't just about Liverpool songs or a certain group of people, it's about values. It's an opportunity for people to see the real Liverpool and what comes from inside Anfield and what comes with the match every week."



Moments prior to taking to the stage for his own chest-pounding headline appearance, Jamie Webster echoes this sentiment from his dressing-room. "It was a rollercoaster in that stadium today that was beyond belief, there were so many mixed emotions and it's hard to come down off a ride like that but I'm thankful we have BOSS Night this evening and everyone is realising what we've managed to achieve with two cups in the bag so let's celebrate."

Tonight the likes of Ben Burke, Timo Tierney, Kieo and Jamie Webster each bring their own distinct flavour to proceedings – from Beatles covers through to soul and reggae classics, it's the perfect precursor to their performances in front of over 50,000 giddy fans in Paris for the Champions League final. Though these are career defining, life-affirming moments, Jamie says he isn't ready to dwell on them all just yet and remains intent on moving forward.

"When I've got some kids and grandkids who are going to the matches and doing it, maybe it will touch with me then. It's an unbelievable feeling and the fact that 'Allez Allez Allez' is a part of the matchday now, it's a song that's etched in Liverpool FC history and folklore, everyone will remember the time that song came out and what came from it with Kyiv and Madrid. I'm just lucky to have been in that place and time and to have written myself into that history.

I'M THANKFUL WE HAVE BOSS NIGHT THIS EVENING AND EVERYONE IS REALISING WHAT WE'VE MANAGED TO ACHIEVE WITH TWO CUPS IN THE BAG SO LET'S CELEBRATE!








L.F.C.
Carlsberg
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"I'm always onto the next thing with my own career and we've got a crazy summer lined up. When you dwell on things and look for that sense of nostalgia it's quite easy for your head to hit the clouds and that's something I'm very conscious of making sure doesn't happen – it's about keeping doing what I'm doing. I don't dwell on the journey so far, that will probably come when I'm old and bitter that I can't do it anymore!

"I'm buzzing, I'm a Liverpool fan through and through, I go home and away to Europe and still do now even though my life has changed."

Most of all Webster is glad to be sharing this incredible platform with his friends: "It's socialism at the end of the day, what Shankly founded his ethos on, we all look after each other. We're all Reds and we're all happy to get out there and show the crowd we want to be here.

"It's boss we've been able to do The Olympia again, it's such a special venue and we've all been on the journey together – we're just very, very blessed to watch this football team."



IT'S BOSS WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO THE OLYMPIA AGAIN, IT'S SUCH A SPECIAL VENUE AND WE'VE ALL BEEN ON THE JOURNEY TOGETHER – WE'RE JUST VERY, VERY BLESSED TO WATCH THIS FOOTBALL TEAM





THE FUTURE IS RED

What a season that was. And the very good news is, the excitement doesn't stop there. In fact Harvey Elliott can hardly wait to get going again with an old pal in the mix



**arvey Elliott can't wait to link up with his former Fulham team-mate Fabio Carvalho when the Reds return for pre-season. The pair played their first senior competitive fixture together for the Cottagers in a Football League Trophy tie at Wycombe Wanderers back in September 2018. At the time, Elliott was still 15 and Carvalho had just turned 16.**

Now the talented duo, who are still teenagers, will link-up for Liverpool after the Reds agreed a deal to bring in the attacking midfielder on 1 July.

"We've had loads of conversations," reveals Elliott. "He's been asking questions and we've kept in contact ever since I left Fulham.

"Fabio is a great kid as well as a great player and I don't need to say too much on him because he will show people very quickly why Liverpool have signed him. I'll let him do the talking on that one! He's a great player and I think he'll bring that flair to this team, that sort of young power in a way, and he's definitely one for the future.



Words: William Hughes

"He has the work-rate, he has the ability and the skills, the shooting, the dribbling, you name it, he has it and he'll be a great asset to the team.

"I've known him for quite a while now and to be able to reunite with him and hopefully play on the same pitch with him will be like the old days and that will be great.

"I'll make sure I look after him and get him involved quickly. He's got the Portuguese in him so he can be close friends also with Jots [Diogo Jota] and many more too. I'm sure he'll settle in quickly and hopefully we can both show why we deserve to share the pitch with one another again."

After spending most of the 2020/21 campaign on loan at Blackburn Rovers in the Championship, Elliott enjoyed something of a breakthrough season at Anfield last term, making eleven appearances across four competitions as the Reds went so close to an unprecedented quadruple.

That total of games would have been higher had he not dislocated an ankle during the 3-0 win at Leeds United in September. Following surgery, he returned to action in February and scored his first Liverpool goal in front of the Kop in a 3-1 win over Cardiff City in an FA Cup fourth-round tie.



"I had bad luck with an injury, but to clear that was a great accomplishment in itself," he admits. "To be able to get through what I got through and to be able to bounce back and recover so I could play again this season…I didn't think I would.

"It was tough and there were a few dips. I don't think I've played as much as I would have wanted since I've been back, but there's hopefully many more years to come of me playing football. So, at the same time, I needed to take a step back and realise what I needed to do for myself to make sure that I'm right for next season.

"I'm feeling 100 per cent now. I'm feeling better in myself and I played against Southampton [away on 17 May] and my confidence has been growing a lot more so I'm making sure I'm always focused and ready.

"I learnt not to take anything for granted, to be honest, but I came through it and I'm so thankful that opportunities came my way and that I've been able to support this team as a fan and as a player. Hopefully more exciting times are on the way."

The no67 also says that Jürgen Klopp's famed management skills made the road to recovery less bumpy than it might have been. "He's the best manager I've worked under. He's a great guy as well as a great coach and you can tell that from the years he's been at Liverpool where he's got the team to so many finals and gained so much experience for us as players.

"We're all very thankful to have him and very happy that he signed a contract to be here for a few more years. To be learning from someone as experienced as him is of great benefit for me and everyone else in the squad.

"When I had my injury, he was always there, always messaging me, seeing if I was okay and putting his arm around me. To be given the experiences that he's given me and the opportunities, I can't thank him enough. Hopefully there's many more opportunities that I can have to show him why I can play in this team and why I deserve these experiences.





"I'M FEELING 100 PER CENT NOW. I'M FEELING BETTER IN MYSELF AND I PLAYED AGAINST SOUTHAMPTON AND MY CONFIDENCE HAS BEEN GROWING A LOT MORE SO I'M MAKING SURE I'M ALWAYS FOCUSED AND READY"

"I don't think there is a player in the world who wouldn't want to play for him. You see how he is on camera and in interviews. He's like a father figure to this team. Everyone looks up to him and everyone wants to go that extra mile for him."

The influence of senior figures in the team has also been important and Harvey says he has learnt a lot every day from seeing how a player with the Premier League longevity of James Milner – just recently awarded an MBE – goes about his business. It's been well-documented that the Reds vice-captain made his Premier League bow for Leeds United in November 2002, almost five months before Elliott was born.

"I read that stat and it's absolutely incredible. He has a massive effect on us younger players as well as the other senior players. He's been around for so many years now and has played so many vital games, He has so much experience that even the senior players will still be learning from him.

"Personally, I think to have him in the dressing-room and around the club is invaluable. He's a person that I've been wanting to learn from a lot in terms of how he recovers and how he trains. He always gives it 110 per cent and even though he has the most Premier League appearances of anyone here, you don't see that in him.

"He's always wanting to go the extra mile and work a lot harder to make himself an even better player so to be training with him, to be gaining experience from him and to have him as a team-mate is amazing for me. Hopefully he will stay for a few more years because he's a great guy as well as a great player."

Elliott has been gaining experience all the time too. Like Milner he was a Premier League debutant at 16, becoming the competition's youngest-ever player when he made his bow for Fulham at Wolves in May 2019, aged 16 years and 30 days.

This season he made his debut in the UEFA Champions League, being named in the starting line-up for the Reds' 2-0 win over Inter Milan at the San Siro in a round-of-16 first leg. Earlier in the campaign, youngsters Max Woltman and Conor Bradley had made their Champions League debuts off the bench at the same venue, as Liverpool won 2-1 in a group-stage game against AC Milan.

"I try to use that experience when I play but I think at the same time that the squad has so much experience, with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Curtis Jones and the even younger ages.

"I'm learning from them and just going and enjoying football and using my freshness and my eagerness to have that difference in the team. But, as I say, I have had quite a bit of experience myself too. I've played in big games now like the Carabao Cup final and the Merseyside derby, so I've had these experiences and hopefully there are many more to come.

"I'm learning from everything that comes my way and trying





"TRENT DESERVES TO HAVE PLAYED IN THREE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINALS BECAUSE HE'S A GREAT KID AS WELL AS A GREAT PLAYER. HE'S ONE OF THE BEST RIGHT-BACKS IN THE WORLD AND IT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME THAT HE'S PLAYED IN THOSE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINALS"

to put it into my game to ensure that I'm making myself a better person and a better player."

Like Milner, Alexander-Arnold is another from whom Elliott has drawn inspiration, especially when he considers how much the right-back – one of four Liverpool players named in UEFA's Champions League 'Team of the Season' for 2021/22 – has achieved at the tender age of 23.

"Trent deserves to have played in three Champions League finals because he's a great kid as well as a great player. He's one of the best right-backs in the world and it doesn't surprise me that he's played in those Champions League finals already.

"He's a top player and I know this club means a lot to him. He's supported it since he was a young kid and it means a lot to me to see him celebrate with the fans.

"There's an age-difference between us, but he's not too far ahead in years. I can see the experiences that he's been given and I'm hoping to earn those myself in the next few years."

Reflecting on the experience of his own Champions League debut back in February brings a smile to his face. Elliott was in the crowd as a Liverpool supporter when the Reds lost the final of European football's premier cup competition to Real Madrid in 2018 and this season ended with him being able to sample the showpiece occasion as a part of the matchday squad.

"The experiences just keep coming, don't they? To be able to say that I've played and even been in matchday squads as a player was one of many of my dreams of being at Liverpool.

"It's a whole squad effort in the club, including the younger ones. We're doing this for the club, whoever's involved. We're a team and we're here together and whatever we achieve, we achieve it as a club.

"When you see how many players have been involved across the various competitions, it's all credit to the gaffer for getting everyone involved and giving everyone experiences. If



"WINNING THE CARABAO CUP AND FA CUP AT WEMBLEY ARE EXPERIENCES I'LL FOREVER REMEMBER. IT WAS INCREDIBLE SEEING OUR PLAYERS AND FANS THERE CELEBRATING AS A TEAM. SOME PLAYERS PROBABLY HAVEN'T PLAYED AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED TO, BUT WE'RE ALL HERE TOGETHER AND WE ALL GOT TO THREE FINALS TOGETHER. WE ALL PLAYED A PART ON THE JOURNEY"







it weren't for each and every one of us then we wouldn't have been in that position of playing every game we could.

"That includes the fans as well, travelling home and away and giving us the support that we need and the desire to go and get results for them. They work long hours to be able to afford tickets and make sure they can fly away with us, so we're just very thankful for them and hopefully we can enjoy more success together in the future."

Earning his first winner's medals has left Elliott even more eager to add to his collection in the years to come. "To win one trophy would have been special, let alone it being my breakthrough season.

"Winning the Carabao Cup and FA Cup at Wembley are experiences I'll forever remember. It was incredible seeing our players and fans there celebrating as a team.

"Some players probably haven't played as much as they wanted to, but we're all here together and we all got to three finals together. We all played a part on the journey.

"I've now had experiences of winning trophies and I'm hungry and eager for more and I think that just sums the club up. We never just rest on what we've had, we want more and more and more."

The midfielder says the team can use the hurt of missing out on two other trophies – the Premier League and the Champions League – in the final six days of an exhausting season, as added motivation when the 2022/23 campaign gets underway.

"We were all upset. The manager himself was upset, but they are experiences we can use to put things right in the future. As soon as the final whistle went against Wolves and we heard the result [at Man City] we couldn't change it. It's the same with the Champions League.

"We can't go back and change it. I wish we could, but we can't, so we are going to use the disappointments we felt to put it right because we're all hungry and we're all fighting to get more silverware.

"We'll use it as motivation to have the fire and the desire in us to put it right."

WHERE TO PLAY?

"I'm just excited to play wherever to be honest, if that's centre-back or left-back or wherever. It's one of those situations where I'm just happy to put the shirt on and give it my all. It's a club that I've supported ever since I was a young kid, so to be able to play anywhere on the pitch is a dream for me and I just want to do the best I can if I'm needed. I'm learning a lot from different people in different positions and hopefully taking those things into my game to be ready for whatever comes. To be able to play on the pitch, wherever that is, is a dream."



ALL ABOUT DIAZ

"He's a world-class player. To be able to watch him play live is amazing and it's crazy to be able to share the dressing-room with him and learn from him. He just brings out something extra in the squad and he's been a shining light since he's arrived here. He's a great lad too for all that we can speak – but he's got a bit of English and I've got a bit of Spanish! Hopefully we can soon get over that language barrier and have more conversations. To be able to watch him every week is so exciting for Liverpool fans."



THAT WAS 2021/22

Words: Chris McLoughlin

So many highlights from an utterly sensational season, but we've managed to narrow them down over the next few pages. Enjoy – again!



BEST COMEBACK:
VIRGIL VAN DIJK v Norwich City (A) Premier League

Coming back from 2-0 down to beat Villarreal 3-2 at El Madrigal in the Champions League semi-final was the best comeback over 90 minutes, but the best comeback over the entire season was Virgil van Dijk.

Sidelined for ten months with a serious knee injury, nobody quite knew how often he could play during season 2021/22 or if he'd be the same player ever again.

Virgil appeared in 51 of LFC's 63 games and looked every bit as good as he was. He was a solid 8/10 every week and only gets noticed if he makes a rare mistake. Elite level, that.

BEST QUOTE:
JURGEN KLOPP v Burnley (H) Premier League

Writing in the matchday programme before the opening home match of the season against Burnley, the manager absolutely nailed, with an industrial hammer, what supporting Liverpool is all about.

"What makes this place special is the appreciation of the journey," he wrote. "A friend of mine who is closer to the fan culture than I could ever profess to be, said to me that people support Liverpool not because they are glory-hunters but because they are 'journey-hunters'. I love this sentiment."

And what a journey supporting the Reds is.



BEST GOAL:
MO SALAH v Manchester City (H) Premier League

When you've got 147 goals to pick from, selecting one is no easy task, but Mo's effort against Manchester City at Anfield won Premier League Goal of the Season and it's hard to rank anything higher.

Salah glanced over his shoulder before receiving a pass from Curtis Jones and used his body to shrug Joao Cancelo off before flicking the ball from left foot to right, leaving Phil Foden standing and the sliding Bernardo Silva on his backside as he cut between them. As Mo ran at Aymeric Laporte he faked shooting with his left, instead dragging the ball back onto his right, before striking a shot that flew past the diving Ederson.

It wasn't just how Salah scored this stunner, it was who he scored it against.





BEST AWAY END:
TRAVELLING KOP v Manchester Utd (A)
Premier League

Manchester United 0 Liverpool 5. The Reds' biggest-ever win at Old Trafford and it could easily have been more. Naby Keita got the party started and Diogo Jota was also on target as Liverpool raced into a four-goal half-time lead, but it was Mo Salah's hat-trick – the tenth consecutive game he had scored in – that had Scouse voices reverberating around Old Trafford to a bit of Status Quo. "And I like it, I like it, I like it, I like it, I li-li-like it, li-li-like, Here we go-oh, Salah scored ten in a row!"

Many United fans were at the wheel of their cars heading off long before full-time.



BEST IMPROV:
DIVOCK ORIGI v Preston North End
(A) Carabao Cup

He scored in a Champions League final. He got two against Barcelona. Dortmund home and away? Completed it, mate. And he netted about 27 goals against Everton at Anfield. But the eternal question remained. Could Divock Origi do it at Deepdale on a cold Wednesday night? He most certainly could.

With the Reds 1-0 up at Preston North End in the Carabao Cup, a cross from Kostas Tsimikas hit the crossbar and from the rebound a Neco Williams shot was deflected across goal. The ball flew behind Origi, so he nonchalantly flicked a leg out behind him and scorpion-kicked it into the goal, as you do when you're the GOAT.





BEST SHOT:
THIAGO v Porto (H) Champions League

Mo may have won our goal of the season, but there is no question that Thiago's shot against Porto was the best of 2021/22. And it also went in!

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's free-kick was headed out to around 30 yards from goal, where Thiago raced towards the ball. Without taking a touch, the Spanish midfielder unleashed a powerful daisy-cutter of a shot that skimmed the pitch like a pebble across the sea before nestling in the bottom corner. It showed technique of the highest order to make the ball seemingly levitate before it flew in. And at the Kop end too.



BEST SAVE:
ALISSON BECKER v Tottenham Hotspur (A) Premier League

Alisson made 76 saves in the Premier League this season, four of them during an outstanding performance in the 3-1 win at Crystal Palace in January. He also made numerous vital saves in one-v-one situations – his ability to stay on his feet for longer than most goalkeepers before adopting a hybrid smother/spread technique making him the best in the world – but his best save came at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Son Heung-Min's pass teed up Dele Alli for a certain goal until Alisson dived full-stretch to his left to somehow fingertip the ball past the post. He later denied Alli and Harry Kane in a 2v1 to earn the Reds a point. What a keeper.

BEST ADVENTURE:
JOEL MATIP v Leeds United (H) Premier League

A major flaw in Leeds' man-to-man marking system left Joel Matip as Liverpool's spare man and when he goes on an adventure forward anything can happen. At Elland Road one such wander up the pitch led to Trent Alexander-Arnold crossing for Mo Salah to score, and at Anfield it was Matip who got in on the goalscoring action himself during a 6-0 win.

He surged forward, exchanged passes with Salah and slotted the ball past Ilan Meslier like he was Kenny Dalglish, prompting the Kop to sing his name to the 'Dalglish handclap'. The big smile on Virgil van Dijk's face while that was happening was reflected all around Anfield.

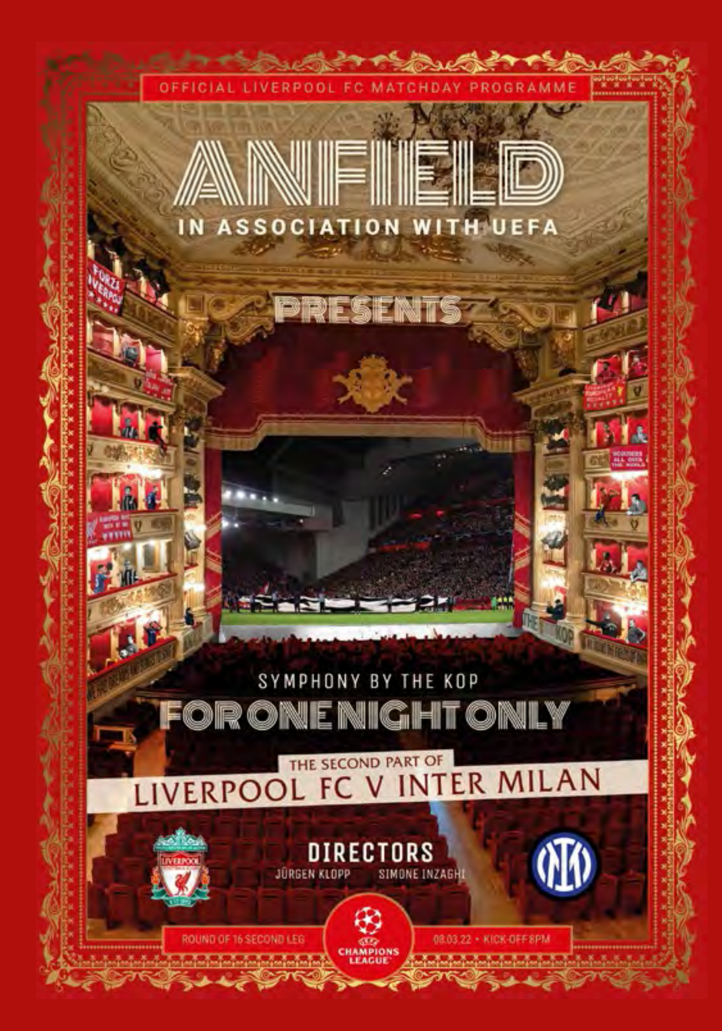


BEST PENALTY:
FABINHO v Chelsea (Wembley) Carabao Cup final

Caoimhin Kelleher's winning spot-kick in the Carabao Cup final shoot-out v Chelsea at Wembley was like something from a fairytale – and an honourable mention must go to Kostas Tsimikas for his FA Cup final winner – but Fabinho's panenka to make it 2-1 earlier on in the League Cup encounter was a joy to behold.

Kepa Arrizabalaga had tried to delay Fabinho's penalty with antics in the goalmouth, earning a warning from referee Stuart Attwell, so for Fabinho to take that in his stride then calmly dink the ball over the Chelsea goalkeeper showed nerves of steel plus plenty of skill. Although don't try it at home, kids.





BEST PROGRAMME COVER:
'FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY' v Internazionale (H) Champions League

If you saw the Liverpool v Villarreal 'Yellow Submarine' programme cover it is truly ridiculous that something else is getting the vote, but as we also publish Liverpool's matchday programmes we can cause our own controversy.

Designed by Colin Sumpter, the 3D image of Anfield turned into an Italian opera house for Liverpool's Champions League game against Inter Milan went viral on social media. It was a work of art, bellissimo! And it didn't cost three tenors to buy one.

BEST SONG:
'I FEEL FINE' v Benfica (A) Champions League

For quite some time it seemed like the 'Oh, he wears the number 20' tribute to Diogo Jota would land this award in clear-cut fashion, but then the travelling Kop went to Lisbon for a Champions League quarter-final.

Inspired by The Beatles, a new ode to Jürgen Klopp emerged. *"Jürgen said to me, you know, we'll win the Premier League, you know he said so. I'm in love with him and I feel fine. I'm so glad that Jürgen is a Red, I'm so glad he delivered what he said. Jürgen said to me, you know, we'll win the Premier League, you know he said so. I'm in love with him and I feel fine."*

Soz Dua Lipa and Calvin Harris, but this is a homemade banger we'll be singing forever.





BEST OPPONENT:
DARWIN NUNEZ v Benfica (A/H) Champions League

Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne is the best non-Liverpool player in the Premier League, but both of his goals against the Reds took deflections off Joel Matip. Spurs' Son Heung-min isn't far behind him and his two goals against LFC proved costly in the Premier League title-race.

But Uruguayan international striker Darwin Nunez also netted home and away against Liverpool in the Champions League and at 22 looks a top talent. If he's playing upfront with Luis Suarez in the World Cup in Qatar then Uruguay will be worth watching, although Porto's Luis Diaz looked half-decent, too…



BEST TACKLE:
SADIO MANE v Manchester City (Wembley) FA Cup semi-final

The boys at the back might disagree and Luis Diaz marking his LFC debut against Cardiff by tackling Perry Ng before teeing up Takumi Minamino for a goal was quite some impact, but Sadio Mane scoring with a tackle in an FA Cup semi-final was hilarious.

Diogo Jota had almost caught out Ederson at the Etihad a week earlier, so when Man City reserve goalie Zack Steffen dwelt on the ball a little too long at Wembley, Mane was onto him in a flash. He slid in and sent the ball flying into the net as Pep Guardiola looked on in horror and Jürgen Klopp celebrated the highest *gegenpress* of all.






BEST BALL CONTROL:
LUIS DIAZ v Everton (H) Premier League

Mo Salah could have a top 20 on his own in this category, but the award goes to a newcomer. Not long after coming on in the Merseyside derby at Anfield, and with Andy Robertson having just opened the scoring, Luis Diaz controlled a diagonal Trent Alexander-Arnold pass with what can only be described as a mid-air rabona.

With both feet off the ground he flicked his right foot out from behind his left leg, brought the ball down and raced past Seamus Coleman like a Ferrari lapping a Williams at Silverstone. "Whoa, what was that?!" said Sky Sports' Jamie Carragher. That was Colombia's finest football, Carra, and he's only just getting started.



BEST PASS:
TRENT ALEXANDER-ARNOLD v Manchester City (Wembley) FA Cup semi-final

Not awarding this to Thiago is perhaps the most scandalous decision since Ipswich Town's George Burley won manager of the season ahead of treble-winning Gerard Houllier in 2001, but Trent Alexander-Arnold gets the nod.

Not many teams have their midfield playmaker at right-back, but then no other right-back can ping a first-time crossfield pass like Trent did for Luis Diaz in the FA Cup semi-final against Man City at Wembley. He struck a powerful yet precise pass from one touchline to the other and that started a move which led to Thiago chipping a pass for Sadio Mane to volley home, a decisive blow that City never recovered from.

BEST SIGNING:
JÜRGEN KLOPP v Villarreal (H) Champions League

Ibou Konate is brilliant at the back, Luis Diaz the most exciting Luis we've had for a decade and who knows how good Fabio Carvalho might be? But there was no bigger signing than Jürgen Klopp penning a new contract until 2026 the day after Liverpool's 2-0 Champions League semi-final win against Villarreal.

The boss's boss Ulla fancied staying on Merseyside and when Jürgen told LFC's owners FSG about it they had a contract on the table pronto. "Ulla wants to stay and as a good husband what are you doing when your wife wants to stay?" quipped Jürgen. "You are staying. There is just so much to love about this place."



BEST PENALTY SAVE:
ALISSON v Chelsea (Wembley) FA Cup final

Having performed a rabona penalty save in Liverpool's Carabao Cup win at Norwich City, Caoimhin Kelleher would have walked this award if it wasn't for the FA Cup final.

With Liverpool and Chelsea level in sudden death – again – Mason Mount stepped up and confidently struck his penalty low towards the bottom corner. The net waited to ripple, but plunging to his left was Alisson Becker and he palmed the ball into the air before celebrating by collapsing to his knees and pointing skywards. Up stepped Kostas Tsimikas and seconds later the FA Cup had red ribbons hanging from its ears.

BEST TROPHY LIFT:
JORDAN HENDERSON v Chelsea (Wembley) FA Cup final

Before lifting the Carabao Cup at Wembley, skipper Jordan Henderson set a new record when he moved his feet 26 times during the 'Hendo Shuffle', beating his personal high of 20 from the 2019 Champions League final. He was subsequently surpassed by LFC Women captain Niamh Fahey who produced an impressive 28 steps while doing the 'Fahey Shuffle' before raising the Women's Championship trophy aloft.

So after receiving the FA Cup from the Duke of Cambridge, Henderson had to up his game. He responded with a magnificent 30-step 'Hendo Shuffle' before lifting the trophy. Truly remarkable footwork.



BEST BANNER: 'I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM & EIFFEL FINE' v Real Madrid (Paris) Champions League final

See what Kopite Gemma Smith did there? Not only did Gemma's traditional home-made red-and-white banner contain such a clever play on words, it also featured a silver Eiffel Tower and six stars for each of our European Cups. She even took it to Paris with her and held it aloft in front of some big tower there. Hang it in the Louvre.





BEST PARTY:
LIVERPOOL FANS in Liverpool (H) Bus Parade

After finishing second in the Premier League and losing the Champions League final on consecutive weekends some Liverpool players were worried the open-top bus tour of the city would fall flat. As if! We are Liverpool and This is Liverpool, so when the players paraded the FA Cup and League Cup an estimated 500,000-plus Reds lined the streets and turned the skies red.

It was a remarkable show of support given many fans were still en route back from Paris. Those who wish to detract from our achievements reckon winning the FA Cup and League Cup, missing the Premier League title by a point, reaching a Champions League final, scoring 147 goals and beating Man United and Everton 15-1 on aggregate constitutes 'a disappointing season'. Have it in writing that those same people would give anything to see their clubs have a 'disappointing' season like 2021/22 was for Liverpool FC…and as ever we'll be back supporting our team no matter what and hoping for more disappointing trophy-lifts in season 2022/23.

UP THE REDS!




I'M SO GLAD THAT
JURGEN
IS A RED
I'M IN LOVE WITH
HIM & I FEEL FINE!
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

FIVE STARS

BBC Sport pundit Garth Crooks picked a handful of Liverpool players in his Premier League team of the season – and here's what he had to say about each one



"CRUCIAL IN THE BIG MOMENTS"
"One of the reasons the Reds have been so successful is Alisson. The towering Brazilian goalkeeper continues to make crucial one-on-one saves during the big moments. He's also one of those goalkeepers who, when producing great saves, makes them look quite ordinary."

"IMMACULATE ON THE PITCH"
"Virgil van Dijk looks immaculate on the pitch and plays in the same manner. He is without doubt the best defender on the planet – and without him, Liverpool wouldn't have had anywhere near the success they have had.""





TRUE LIVERPOOL TRADITION"

"Trent Alexander-Arnold plays in that true Liverpool tradition where full-backs fly forward and get among the action. He has a remarkable 19 assists in all competitions this season, and could top 20 by the time the Champions League final is over."

"THE MOST COMMITTED STRIKER"

"What a season this lad Sadio Mane has had. Diogo Jota arrives and tries to take his place and so does Luis Diaz but to no avail. He then flies off to Cameroon for a month to play for Senegal in the Africa Cup of Nations, wins the tournament for his country with the decisive penalty in the final shootout, comes back to Liverpool and picks up where he left off. Mane has been sensational for Liverpool and is without doubt the most committed striker in the country."



"GOALS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES"

"The final few games of the season found the Football Writers' Footballer of the Year struggling for form [and] I could almost pin-point the moment Mohamed Salah went off the boil. But it seems inconceivable to even think of leaving out a player who has scored 23 Premier League goals – those goals speak for themselves."



EVERYONE'S A WINNER

Four Liverpool players were named in the Champions League Team of the Season for 2021/22. Trent Alexander-Arnold, Fabinho, Andy Robertson and Virgil van Dijk were part of the XI selected by UEFA's Technical Observer panel. Three Reds also made the six-man shortlist for the 2021/22 Men's PFA Players' Player of the Year award: Virgil again plus Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah.



Mo of course shared the Premier League Golden Boot award with Tottenham's Heung-min Son, with both players scoring 23 goals in the top flight. It's the third time Salah has won the Golden Boot, having done so in 2017/18 and 2018/19, with Thierry Henry (four) now the only player to win it more times.

Mo also picked up the Playmaker of the Season award, after recording more assists (13) than any other player. Trent was second with 12 and Andy Robertson joint-third with 10.



At the other end of the pitch Alisson shared the Golden Glove award with Manchester City counterpart Ederson, with the Brazilian goalkeepers both having kept 20 clean-sheets. It's the second time Alisson has won the award.

More recently James Milner was awarded an MBE for services to football and charity. The Liverpool vice-captain has been recognised for his career in the professional game that has spanned nearly two decades. Now 36, he's currently fourth on the Premier League's all-time appearances list with 588, has 61 England caps, and set up the James Milner Foundation to promote healthy recreation for young people in the UK.

And then there's the boss: League Managers' Association manager of the year. Upon receiving the award Jürgen Klopp reflected: "It is a great honour and it was an insane season… When you win a prize like this you are either a genius or you have the best coaching staff in the world – I am here with four of my coaching staff, and they know how much I appreciate them…

"I don't believe in individual prizes in football generally, it is a team sport and I would be nothing without these boys there. It is all about what we can do together and what we did together."




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Chat

Before heading off for a well-earned end-of-season rest, Reds centre-backs Virgil van Dijk and Joel Matip caught up with BT Sport's former Liverpool striker Michael Owen to discuss the evolving art of defending

OFFSIDES AWARD
PER GAME
PREMIER LEAGUE 2021/

LIVERPOOL	4.1
MANCHESTER CITY	2.5
WOLVES	2.3
LEICESTER	2
BRENTFORD	1.9
MANCHESTER UTD	1.9

***MICHAEL OWEN:* Guys, thanks for joining me. The profile of a Liverpool centre-half has changed over the years, certainly since I was at the club, and I just want to drill down on some of the aspects of your game that you think have changed over the years and the demands of that. So first of all, the offside trap that you're currently playing, the high-line and your commitment to that. How did this first develop?**

JOEL MATIP: I think it's part of our game that we press quite high and to keep the gaps in-between [the lines] not too big, we have to push up to make the spaces as tight as possible in the midfield. Of course this leaves some space at the back but I think it has worked quite well so far, so we will keep on going.

***MO:* I'm interested to know where did the idea of that brave high-line first start? Was it the manager? A coach? From you as players?**

VIRGIL VAN DIJK: Well, I think first-and-foremost, it's not an offside trap. We don't do it in that way. As Joel said, we try to press high up the pitch and in order to do that you have to keep a high-line because otherwise the space in-between will be too big and allow the opponent to play in between us.

Obviously when you create the amount of pressure that we always try to do, then it becomes more difficult for the opponent to find the right free player and then there's more chance for the players upfront to be offside. The way of playing higher up the pitch is something that the manager has tried to establish since day one that he's been at the club. Obviously we have to train it a lot and you have to communicate a lot with it and I think that's key in this way of playing.

***MO:* If we look at the average offsides against teams last season in the Premier League, it's quite clear for everyone to see it's miles clear of anybody else. Liverpool have an average of 4.1 against them with Manchester City next with 2.5, then Wolves with 2.3. What benefit do you think that has, Joel?**





JM: Because the way to the opposite goal is quite a lot closer. That's the reason why it's always easier when you don't have to start from the beginning, from the keeper, but win back balls directly in front. This is only possible if we are really close. And of course, if we can just step up and close the space in front of us, it will help us to win possession and play on from there.

***MO:* Playing that brave higher line of course makes you vulnerable but you're almost the 'fall guys' in this system in many ways. You've got so much space in-behind you that it does leave you vulnerable…**

VVD: Yeah, there is a lot of space behind us. But in order to come there it's still quite a challenge. Obviously, teams can go direct against us but normally you can see those balls coming and you have to react to that.

We have quite a lot of speed at the back as well and we have a goalkeeper who is obviously front-footed and will be there too and, even when there is a ball in-behind us and we are sprinting back, the rest of the team has to come back and win the second ball as well.

So we have different ways to use this. Yes, obviously it's still a bit risky at times, but the rewards are incredible.

***MO:* I was wondering if when you play against a certain opponent, does it matter to you how high your line is in terms of how fast their players are or how much quality they've got in the team or do you just play the same way all the time?**

JM: We try to stick to our way but of course you always react if there is one player who is a little bit quicker or is not that quick, I can be maybe a little bit closer and directly attacking the ball or I can try to anticipate the long-ball that he is likely to prefer if he's a little bit quicker. But I think generally the kind of way always stays the same.



Of course you adapt in certain moments because of the different strengths of the opponent's players and you cannot keep it under control all the time. We are not blind, though, and we don't just push up because we have to do it, but because most of the time we think it works.

MO: ***When I was growing up, I was always listening to what the defenders were being told because I was trying to hurt them in a different way. Do you feel that when you're very fast like you guys are, you almost get two bites of the cherry? A lot of people used to say to me, 'If you're fast, why are you playing offside because you can just run past them anyway?' But when I watch you it's almost like if somebody does break the line, then because you're so aggressive on the press or somebody turns you, you actually get one chance there and because you're so quick, you then get a second chance there anyway?***

VVD: Yes, but I think we have a lot of principles that we have to stick by as well as a back-five – the four defenders and then the goalie. And we are always there to protect each other as well. So regardless of what happens if someone loses a one-v-one then there has to be protection in order to defend the second situation.

We have rules and we have situations that we have to just follow and be there for each other and I think that's key as well in order to be successful.

WE ARE NOT BLIND, WE DON'T PUSH UP BECAUSE WE HAVE TO DO IT, BUT BECAUSE IT WORKS

***MO:** You talk about rules and principles. What are some of those rules? I presume the full-backs have to take their line from the centre-half for starters? In terms of the rules, is it always the centre-halves that dictate the play?*

VVD: Some of the rules we shouldn't even speak about because obviously that gives opponents something to work with! We try to look at the guy on the ball. We know the players that we face and we know the strengths of each other when I'm playing with Joel or Ibou or Joe.

It's good to know and to think ahead to what the opponents might do and, as I said, the key is definitely to be there for each other, protect each other and communicate because you can make life a lot more simple if you speak to each other.

JM: Yes, you always have to do it collectively because if only one of you is dropping, you kill the line. So this is what we have to stick to and of course sometimes there might be a timing issue, but we know how we want to play and most of the time it works out.

It's always better if everybody does the same thing, even if that might not be the best thing at that particular moment. If everybody just does what he wants, then it can't work. But if you all stick to the same thing, even if it is the wrong decision in a particular instance as awful as it sounds – if you stick to it as a team then most of the time it will work out well.

***MO:** Okay, one last question on that situation now. The way Liverpool play in particular, centre-half is a physical position and both you guys have come back from serious injuries. In the old days, players could work themselves back to fitness but now you guys need to be right on it for the position that you're playing in?*



JM: Yes, we had pre-season and it's not my favourite part of the year but we had a lot of work to do and we did it great with the medical team, the fitness team and all the staff who kept an eye on us and tried to manage us through both the pre-season and the beginning of the season. We both managed to stay fit so it worked out quite well.

***MO:* Compliments to you both. I have had bad injuries as well and to come back right where you left the pitch is a huge credit to you both and the medical team here at Liverpool. Of course sometimes mistakes happen. It may only be once every 100 attacks but then you get criticism because this is quite a unique way of defending and of course then lots of experts say, 'See this is the problem with defending like this'.**

VVD: But who are these experts?! Listen, we put our hands up easily when we do when we know that we have done something wrong. You know, we're not daft. We know exactly. We are human beings and we make mistakes. We try to learn from mistakes and make sure they don't happen again. I think after the last international break that we had, we had a very good run in that respect.

***MO:* Absolutely. And, of course, teams that defend in a different way are making mistakes as well – that's what defending and playing is all about. Let's talk about Alisson, one of the best goalkeepers in the world. How important is it having somebody so good when you're obviously playing a risky game in many ways? How good is it having him almost sweeping up and making great saves?**

VVD: I can only speak highly of him. I'm so happy and glad that he is our goalkeeper. The presence he has is incredible. The one-v-ones, the distribution and his contribution on the ball is incredible. For the modern-day football, it's just so important to have such a good goalkeeper.

***MO:* Let's move on to a quick one each to finish. I wanted to move on to a graphic Virgil, that shows that you are starting a lot of attacks that end with a shot, with only Aymeric Laporte of Manchester City starting more. Have you always had that long-range ball in your game? Are you encouraged to use it in games?**

VVD: Yes, when the space is there and when the movements are there up front, obviously you try to hit them but you try to



I'M SO HAPPY AND GLAD THAT ALISSON IS OUR GOALKEEPER. THE PRESENCE HE HAS IS INCREDIBLE, IT'S JUST SO IMPORTANT



mix it up as well. You know, we have such good footballers in midfield too and it's good to have different ways of attacking the opponent.

I'm sure we're going to look at Joel's contribution too and that's the beauty of it – we need different weapons to score and to create problems for the opponent and that's what we are trying to do.

MO: ***And it certainly does create problems for the opponent. I worked on a show with Eddie Howe last season before he took over the Newcastle job and he said that when he was manager at Bournemouth, one thing in his team-talk that he was trying to prevent – more so than anything else – was to try to stop those long-range balls of yours. That was incredible for me to hear as I was thinking: he's a centre-half, why are you worrying about him so much?***

VVD: Yes, I think that game that we played against Bournemouth I was man-marked by Callum Wilson. Obviously teams will see this when they prepare for us and then we have someone like Joel who can dribble against the opponent and create difficult moments for players to come out and then there will be space for others to play. So you know, it's all good.

MO: ***You've done my job for me linking into the next question. In terms of dribbling Joel, that's something that I believe has come into your game more recently rather than when I first saw you play. Has it or have you always been a dribbler out from the back?***

JM: I have developed it a little bit more here, but I did it also in my former club [Schalke] a little bit. But of course in a club where I have the team-mates I have, the opponents are not normally looking to me. So maybe I can make some space for my team-mates and then the outcome is



US AND MANCHESTER CITY PLAY VERY HIGH UP THE PITCH AND THAT'S SOMETHING THAT OTHER TEAMS MIGHT TRY TO REPLICATE OVER THE NEXT YEARS, MORE THAN THEY DO RIGHT NOW

maybe a little bit better. Sometimes I just try to get a different rhythm to our side.

MO: And is there anybody in particular or other team-mates that allow you to do that? You know, that if you go on a little dribble, Jordan Henderson, Fabinho, Virgil, will cover you?

JM: They know me and I absolutely trust in Fab, Virgil and Hendo for instance that they will absolutely have my back and I only could do this because I know that they're there. Even if I lose the ball – and of course I don't want to lose it – I'm not really worried because these guys are always at my back and that means you then feel more free to really go forward.

MO: Are you aware of your sort of cult-hero status with the fans in terms of the memes and the little videos that people present of you?

JM: No, but I only have to look to this guy [Virgil] and he tells me!

MO: But in terms of these little dribbles that everybody loves, are you aware of how much the fans enjoy them?

JM: Yes, Virgil makes me aware of it and maybe my wife! I really enjoy going forward and if I can help the team, it makes the thing even better.

MO: One final question. Virgil. The centre-half role has changed over the years, certainly since I was playing. If you could predict in ten years' time, is there another big change coming? Do you think more people will play with this high-line or will they drop. Is there anything you see in the future that might change in terms of the centre-half role?



VVD: I don't know. I think if you look at us and [Manchester] City for example, we play very high up the pitch. I think that's something that other teams might try to replicate over the next years, more than they do right now. But I think the way football is at the moment, you know, with a lot of speed, it's something that's just the modern day-football and for defenders playing out from the back is a major thing with a goalkeeper that's being used a lot too.

So yes, in my opinion a lot of things that are there at the moment will be there for the next ten years.


WINNERS
2022



"WE'VE PLAYED SOME EXHIBITIONS IN THE FA CUP"

Fancy re-living the joy of that FA Cup final win? Photographer and Reds fan Tony Woolliscroft took these superb shots of the celebrations before and after

Follow Tony on Twitter @tonyredmen1





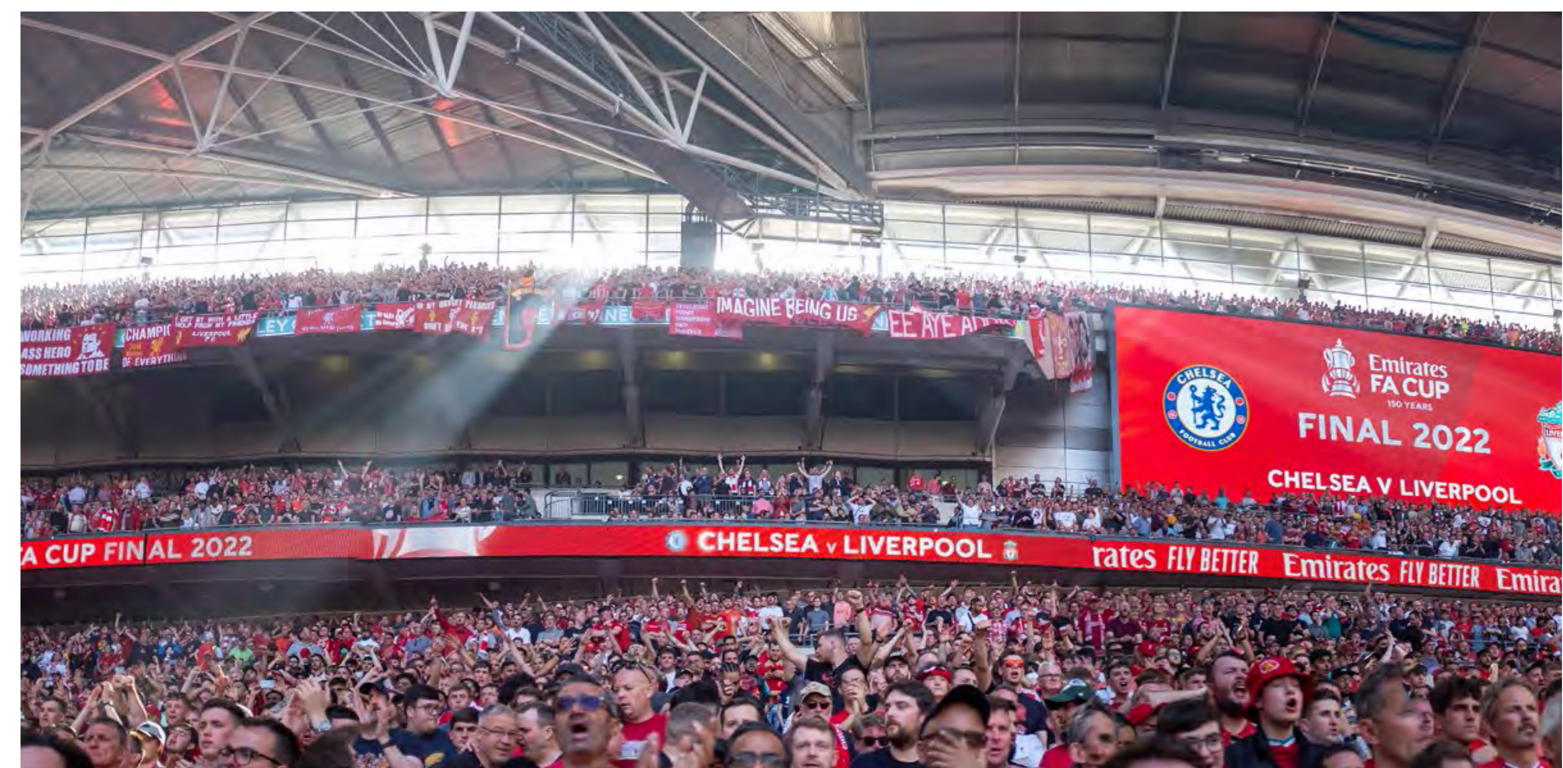

WE'RE NEVER
GONNA STOP

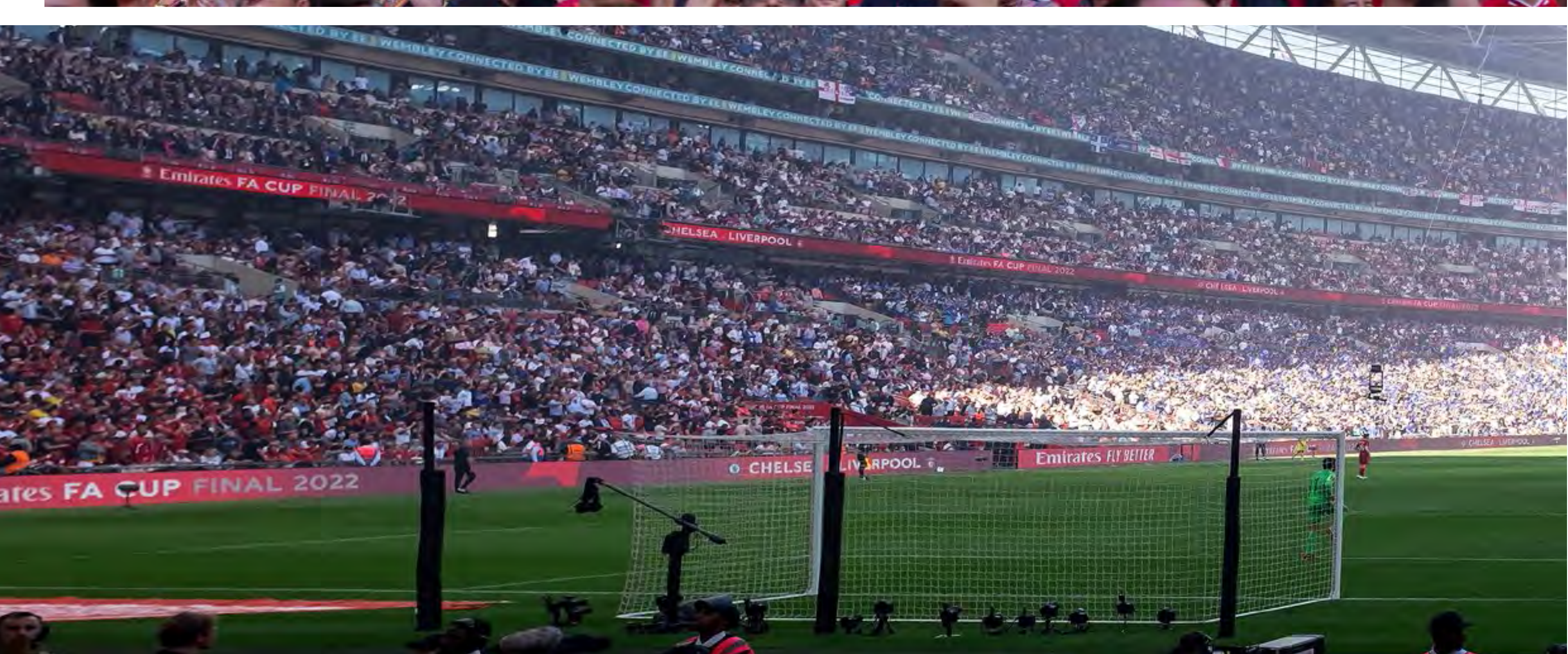

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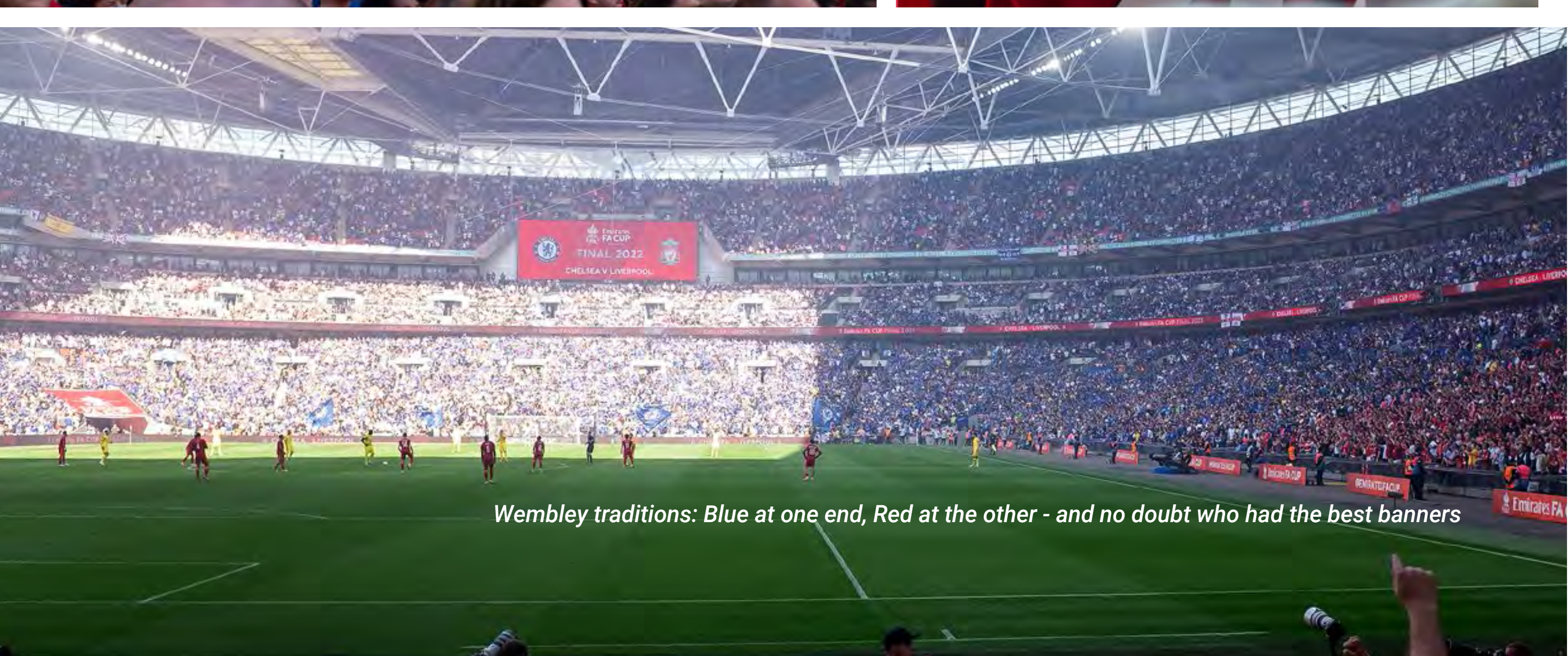
ANFIELD SOUTH: The sunshine was out, the flags were out, the travelling Kop were out in force and the Liverpool team bus was heading into our second home


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Wembley traditions: Blue at one end, Red at the other - and no doubt who had the best banners


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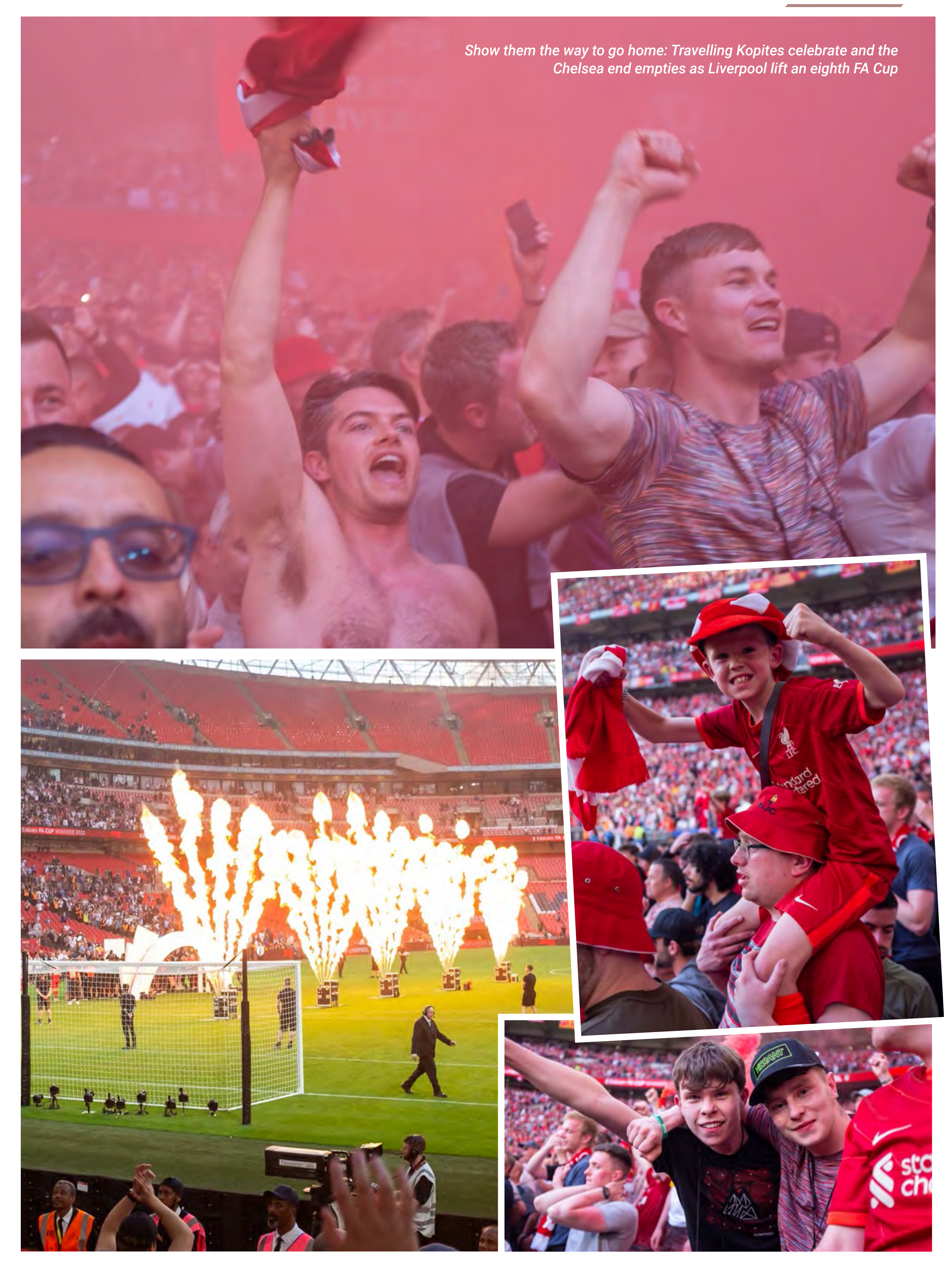


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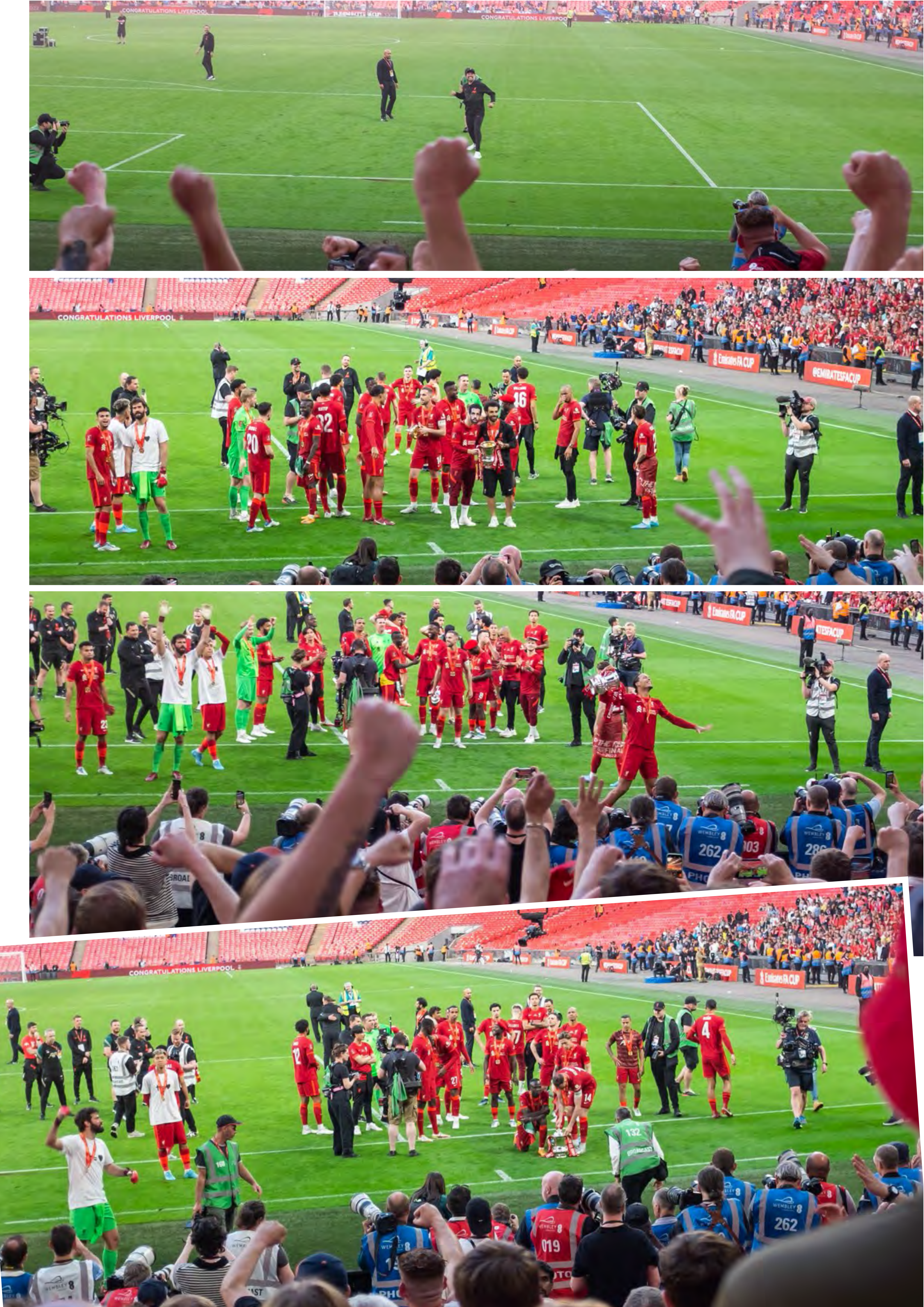
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Show them the way to go home: Travelling Kopites celebrate and the Chelsea end empties as Liverpool lift an eighth FA Cup

Cup winners: Klopp fist-pumps, Mo celebrates with, er, Mo, Virgil shows off the FA Cup to a magnificent Liverpool end and look at Ali. What a day, what a team!


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"I'LL MISS THE BOYS A LOT"

Eight years of Origi have come to a
hero of so many special moments wi

Words: William Hughes

Divock Origi says goodbye to Liverpool believing there is still much more to come from the Reds. As the squad paraded the FA Cup and Carabao Cup trophies around the city the day after the Champions League final defeat by Real Madrid in Paris, he said: "Honestly, it's unbelievable.

"It's been a special season, we fought on every front all season and now being here again – it's only in Liverpool you would see this type of love, even after a defeat, even after the final. I still really feel pain from the final but overall I am feeling grateful and happy.

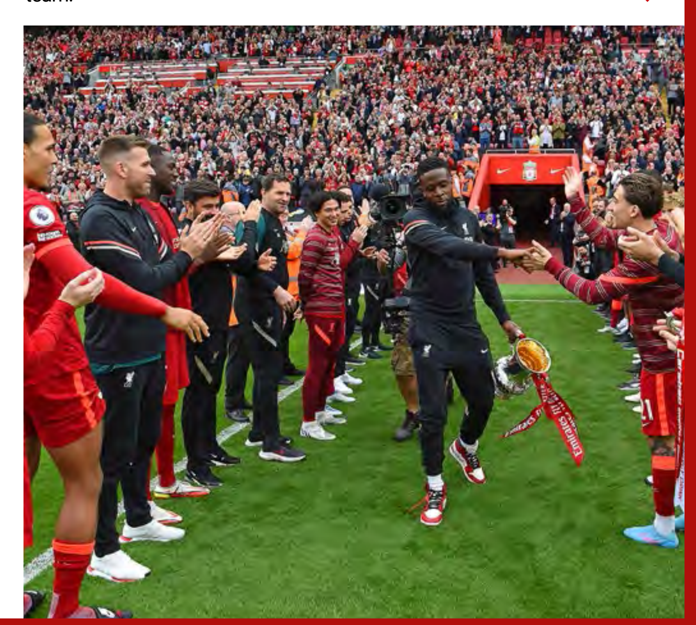
"I will miss these boys a lot. It's been eight years, I've seen a lot of guys, the staff, the fans, and I feel like our purpose is done and that helps to put it in good perspective as well. I feel like we are in good hands – there is still so much more to come from this team."

Origi received a guard-of-honour after his final matchday as a Liverpool player at Anfield. He says having the chance to say goodbye to the supporters in L4 meant a lot to him.

"They are unbelievable years that I've had here and to be able to soak that in with all the fans was very special. Of course we had COVID, but now it's opening up again and to see all the fans just felt amazing."

He says it is hard to pick out his most memorable moment as a Red but rather points out that the whole Liverpool FC experience will stick with him for the remainder of his days.

"There have been a lot of highlights, a lot against Everton and of course the Champions League and hopefully there are a lot more to come for this team.



"It's an unbelievable club. It goes beyond anything I could have ever expected. Signing here...only when you experience it can you know how big this club is, how unbelievable the people are, the atmospheres, the Champions League nights, going from Melwood to the AXA training ground, the people, the staff, the players, it's been a joy.

"I've always tried to put the team first and I just focused on trying to be the best Divock I can be, the best player I can be and then tried to help the team as much as possible and trust that the coach will make the right decisions.

"Of course I wanted to be on the pitch every single minute but even more than that, I wanted to win and we have an unbelievable group and we have achieved so many great things. It's been an honour and a joy.

"When I signed, a friend told me, 'Divock, it's a special club', but you have to experience it. I would say it's like being at Anfield – you have to experience it. It's just something that goes beyond words and something I'll keep with me for the rest of my life."

Barcelona, 'corner taken quickly'? Tottenham Hotspur to seal Champions League glory in Madrid? Any number of Merseyside derbies? It's hard to select a favourite moment of Origi's Liverpool career because there have simply been so many of them.

So it was with heavy hearts that the Reds bade a fond farewell to the affable Belgian who is set to join AC Milan after a memorable eight years at Anfield. The big striker scored 41 goals in 175 appearances, 107 of which came off the substitute's bench.



Signed in the summer of 2014 from Lille for a reported fee of just under £10 million, he was immediately loaned back to the French club for the 2014/15 season. He'd not long made his Liverpool debut when Jürgen Klopp replaced Brendan Rodgers as manager and quickly referenced Origi as someone he had been interested in during his time in charge of Borussia Dortmund.

Origi's first Liverpool goals came in the shape of a hat-trick in a League Cup win at Southampton in December 2015 and by the end of his first

I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO PUT THE TEAM FIRST AND I JUST FOCUSED ON TRYING TO BE THE BEST DIVOCK I CAN BE, THE BEST PLAYER I CAN BE AND THEN TRIED TO HELP THE TEAM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND TRUST THAT THE COACH WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS


YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892
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season, he had also scored vital Europa League goals in both legs of an epic quarter-final win against Dortmund as well as the first of six goals against Everton in Merseyside derbies.

He finished his debut season with ten goals and again reached double-figures in 2016/17 but the arrival of Mohamed Salah the following summer saw him move out on loan again, this time to VfL Wolfsburg. He returned from his spell in the Bundesliga to become an important part of the Reds squad again in 2018/19.

Origi came to the fore in the final weeks of the season, scoring twice in that never-to-be-forgotten Champions League semi-final comeback success against Barcelona and then joining Salah on the scoresheet in the final in Madrid as the Reds defeated Spurs 2-0 to win the famous trophy for a sixth time. He had also experienced the joy of a last-minute winner against Everton in front of the Kop earlier in that campaign.



HE IS AND WILL BE FOR ME FOREVER A LIVERPOOL LEGEND, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PLAYERS I EVER HAD, A JOY TO WORK WITH

Highlights of his 2019/20 season included another couple of goals against Everton in a 5-2 Premier League win at Anfield plus a brace against Arsenal in the League Cup, including the dramatic last-gasp equaliser in a remarkable 5-5 draw.

The arrival and impact of Diogo Jota meant Origi featured far less frequently in 2020/21 but his importance was underlined again last season when he scored a late winner against Wolves, a Champions League goal in a group game with AC Milan at the San Siro, and a couple of goals at Norwich City and, spectacularly, Preston North End along the road to glory in the Carabao Cup.

His final goal, inevitably, came against Everton at Anfield and sealed a 2-0 victory that kept the Reds in the hunt for the Premier League title.

It was fitting that Divock should receive a guard-of-honour following the final home game of the season against Wolves before being presented with a framed 'Wall of Champions' print, along with a photo-montage of some of his finest moments in a Liverpool shirt.

Manager Jürgen Klopp said: "He is and will be for me forever a Liverpool legend, one of the most important players I ever had. That sounds completely strange given the amount of games he had, but it is and was a pure joy to work together with him.

"An outstanding player, an outstanding boy, everybody in the team loves him because he's just a relaxed guy and a really lovable guy. It will be a harsh moment when he leaves.

"Since I'm here, Div is here. I remember so many things when I think about Div that are incredible, some important goals, some bad injuries, ups and downs but he is a Liverpool legend, no doubt and he will be successful, 100 per cent."



Interview: William Hughes

"THE BIGGEST SUMMER OF MY LIFE"

Reds vice-captain Rachel Furness will be proudly wearing the green-and-white of Northern Ireland as they prepare to compete in their first-ever women's Euro finals

Liverpool FC Women's midfielder Rachel Furness is hoping to experience a moment she will never forget on Thursday 7 July. All being well, the Reds vice-captain will walk out at St Mary's, Southampton that evening to line-up for Northern Ireland against Norway in their opening game of UEFA Women's Euro 2022.

It will be a dream-come-true for Furness, almost 17 years after she first represented the country which will be appearing at its first major women's tournament finals.

Rachel, who turns 34 a couple of weeks before the tournament, was born in Sunderland but qualifies to play in the green-and-white through her Belfast-born mum. Last November she scored twice in Northern Ireland's 9-0 World Cup qualifying win over North Macedonia at Crusaders' home ground of Seaview in Belfast. The brace took her overall tally for her country to 38, surpassing the total of former men's forward David Healy to become Northern Ireland's all-time leading goalscorer.

Now, after playing her part in helping Liverpool FC Women win promotion back to the Barclays Women's Super League, she is looking forward to experiencing what will be a groundbreaking month for football in Northern Ireland.

"I think it's helped me a lot coming from a successful club season," she tells us. "With just having won the league, the confidence that I'll now take away to Northern Ireland and with the group is massive for myself personally as well as the whole squad.

"I had a couple of weeks of down-time after the season had finished and now all the focus is on the Euros. It's hard to put into words how excited I am for what's to come."

The Euro 2022 qualifiers proved to be a watershed moment for the progress of the women's game in Northern Ireland as they finished as runners-up to Norway in their group to progress to the play-offs with Furness contributing four goals along the way.

They finished on 14 points from eight games, the same record as Wales. In days past Northern Ireland would have been eliminated due to an inferior goal-difference (zero to a Welsh plus-12). However, the criteria had changed to go on head-to-head record, then away-goals.

The teams had drawn both of their clashes with a goalless stalemate at Seaview preceded by a 2-2 draw at





IT'S A REAL HONOUR AND IT'S PROBABLY THE BIGGEST SUMMER OF MY LIFE. I'M GOING TO ENJOY EVERY MOMENT AND I HOPE I CAN DO LIVERPOOL FC WOMEN PROUD AS WELL AS ALL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Rodney Parade, Newport in September 2019. To highlight the fine lines between sporting success and failure, Northern Ireland's equaliser in that game had been scored by Linfield defender Ashley Hutton in the fourth minute of added-time.

The play-off against Ukraine proved to be a bittersweet affair for Furness. Drawn away from home first, she gave Northern Ireland a vital fifth-minute lead in Kovalivka but later sustained a serious injury which was to rule her out for the rest of the 2020/21 season.

The pain of her broken fibula was somewhat eased, however, when she learned that team-mate Simone Magill, then of Everton, had scored to complete a 2-1 victory in that first leg. Although she had to watch on from the stands, 'Furney' was thrilled to see goals from Marissa Callaghan and Nadene Caldwell produce a 2-0 win in the return game in Belfast to secure her nation's piece of history.

"Even now just thinking about it gives me goosebumps," she says. "It's a real honour that we've been able to achieve what we have.

"It's probably the biggest summer of my life. I'm going to enjoy every moment and I hope I can do Liverpool FC Women proud as well as all my friends and family."

Northern Ireland have a tough group starting with that game against Norway, whose star player Ada Hegerberg – a prolific goalscorer for Lyon who she helped to UEFA Women's Champions League glory last month – came out of international retirement on the eve of the tournament.

On Monday 11 July they will face Austria – semi-finalists at Euro 2017 – before rounding off their group-stage fixtures against England on Friday 15 July.

"Any group would have been tough and there are no easy games of course but we want to go and give a good account of ourselves and we will give it our all," she adds. "It's a massive opportunity for us to put Northern Ireland on the map and we're determined to do that."

All three of Northern Ireland's games will be played at St Mary's and Furness is looking forward to the fans making their base in Southampton and lighting up the South Coast.

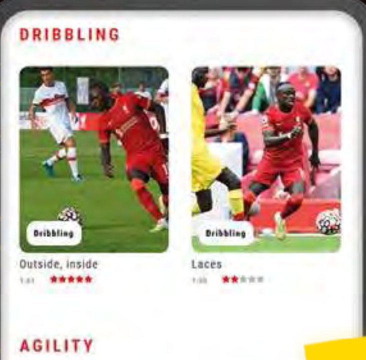
"Southampton is going to be great and I think we're very lucky to have all three games there. It will be like a mini Northern Ireland enclave! Our fanbase will take over Southampton and the 'Green and White Army' will be over in force. I'm sure they'll pitch their tents up and turn Southampton green. It's great that they won't have to travel up and down England and it will be great for us to have the same base too and play the games at a great Premier League stadium."

Whatever the outcome of the group fixtures, Furness believes the legacy of Northern Ireland's achievement in reaching the finals is already clear. "I think you can see the kind of impact that it's already had since we won our play-off and qualified.



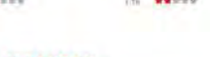
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WALK ON



"We went from having 2,000 spectators at games to 15,000-plus at Windsor Park for our World Cup qualifier against England in April. So I already think it's made an impact and I already can see the change within the younger generation and what it's doing for people off the pitch in supporting the women's game.

"You've got families bringing young boys and young girls to our games and wanting to bring them and wanting to come, not only for the children to see it but wanting to watch it themselves.

"So it's impacting so many people and we want to bring good times to the country. There was a time when we wanted to lift the country and I think we did that. The team has pushed ourselves and everyone has worked hard to keep going when some people were saying that it couldn't be done.

"I hope we can continue to do that and leave a real legacy like the men did in 2016 when they qualified for their first major Euros. Now we want to leave special memories for the women's game."

Furness has become a huge favourite at Liverpool since signing towards the end of 2019 and one of her young fans, Abby, travelled over from Northern Ireland to see her take part in the FA Women's Championship trophy lift against Sheffield United in April.

At the full-time whistle she presented Furness with a Northern Ireland flag which she proudly tied around her waist during the celebrations.

"Abby is one of my fans from Northern Ireland," Furness explains. "She flew over twice this season and came over to see the trophy-lift. I saw the flag and so at the final whistle went over and grabbed it!

"Afterwards I had my picture taken with her and the trophy and that was special. We appreciate the support of all our fans so much and hopefully I helped to make her day. She was really happy and so you can see the ripple-effect it is having on the younger generation."

TWO SHADES OF GREEN

Republic of Ireland forward Leanne Kiernan says she will be rooting for Furness at the tournament. Having finished as Liverpool's top scorer last season with 14 goals in all competitions, she says: "Furney is an incredible person and a great player and it's brilliant to see Northern Ireland at the tournament. It's going to be an exciting summer for them and I am planning to be in Southampton for the England game to cheer her on, wearing my green Ireland shirt!"



EURO VISION

The Women's Euro 2022 tournament kicks off on Wednesday 6 July when England host Austria at Old Trafford in Manchester. It concludes on Sunday 31 July when the final will be held at Wembley Stadium. Sixteen teams will be battling it out for glory with Furness's Northern Ireland competing in the competition finals for the first time. England are the host nation and Netherlands are the reigning champions.

WHAT OCCURRED MAY

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

Words: Chris McLoughlin

Go to Spain, they said. Get a bit of sunshine on your back, they said. Watch Liverpool comfortably see off Villarreal in the Champions League semi-final second leg, they said.

"Being 2-0 up is a good lead for us," Trent Alexander-Arnold said. "But it's a dangerous one and we can't let complacency slip in," Trent said. "It's about going over there and putting the game to bed, hopefully early on," Trent said.

At half-time inside El Madrigal, where the Villarreal rain had relentlessly poured down and Liverpool had shipped two first-half goals, it seemed a long way away. And it felt like au revoir Paris because the Reds were very much in danger of being sunk by 'The Yellow Submarine'.

Pressing, passing, marking, shooting – everything was off. That statistic about LFC not winning the away leg of a European Cup/Champions League semi-final since 1985 felt like a millstone hung around necks, but Jürgen Klopp had an ace up his soggy sleeve for the second half.



Luis Diaz came on and flicked a switch. Liverpool's light went back on. Diaz repeatedly ran at right-back Juan Foyth, who must have been wishing ex-club Spurs had signed the Colombian, and with the Reds now on the front-foot they scored three.

Fabinho, the one player Villarreal hadn't expected to run into their box, did precisely that and fired a pass from Mo Salah between Geronimo Rulli's legs. Diaz quickly made it 2-2 when he timed his run into the box perfectly to head Alexander-Arnold's cross through Rulli's legs. And when Rulli then rushed out of his box only to be beaten to Naby Keita's through-ball by Mane, Liverpool were heading to Paris.

Sadio escaped the challenge of Foyth, leisurely ambled forward and rolled the ball into an empty net, making doing it the hard way look easy.

"It's great to be in the final for the third time in five years, it's unbelievable," said Salah, who smiled like a Cheshire cat when Fabinho scored. "I'm sure we're going to celebrate, but we have another game so we have to focus on it as well."

Meanwhile in Bournemouth, on-loan Nat Phillips was celebrating after helping the Cherries to secure automatic promotion with a 1-0 win against Nottingham Forest. I didn't see the game, but assume Big Nat ended it with a bandaged skull after heading Steve Cooper's kitchen-sink back to Nottingham.







Also heading to Paris on 28 May would be Real Madrid. It looked like Man City had one foot on the Champs Elysees when Riyad Mahrez put them 5-3 up on aggregate in the Santiago Bernabeu, but they collapsed like an English cricket team to concede two 90th-minute goals and lost in extra-time. Sometimes your name just isn't on the trophy.

Liverpool U23s had their name on a trophy when they beat Burnley 1-0 in Leyland, courtesy of a James Norris half-volley, to lift the Lancashire FA Senior Cup. It won't go on the Champions Wall, but success breeds success and with lads like Marcelo Pitaluga, Conor Bradley, Owen Beck, Rhys Williams, Leighton Clarkson and Tyler Morton in Barry Lewtas' side, it adds to the mentality you need to make it at LFC.

Another trophy was lifted the following day, this time by Salah at a glitzy ceremony in London when he received the Football Writers' Association Footballer of the Year award for the second time – a double only previously completed in Liverpool red by Kenny Dalglish and John Barnes.

Of course, absolutely nobody noticed that Mo was sitting at a table with Ian Rush, outgoing sporting director Michael Edwards, his successor Julian Ward and his agent Ramy Abbas Issa and there was absolutely no social-media speculation about what this could mean regarding a new contract. But they were all smiling so fingers crossed, eh?

It was also new kit day on 5 May as LFC unveiled their all-red Nike home kit for season 2022/23 with the most significant change being 96 becoming 97 between the eternal flames on the back following the passing of Andrew Devine. The smallest of touches can be the biggest of things. And the kit looks boss too.

Back on the pitch, however, came a knock. Liverpool 1 Tottenham Hotspur 1 was undoubtedly a blow in the title race. Never before had an Anfield crowd felt so deflated to see Liverpool go top of the Premier League ahead of playing in an FA Cup and Champions League final with the League Cup already won.

Yet when the full-time whistle went to end the Reds' run of 12 consecutive home league wins, there was an unmistakable feeling of disappointment in the air. Which seems quite ridiculous in a season when Liverpool remain in contention to win an unprecedented quadruple, but was true nonetheless.

Spurs parked the bus so well that you wondered if Jose Mourinho was on their bench wearing an Antonio Conte mask and although a deflected Diaz shot cancelled out Son Heung-min's opener, it never quite looked like Liverpool would conjure up







a winner. "I'm really, really exhausted," Son told BT Sport at full-time. "This was one of the toughest games I've ever played in."

It was tough enough to watch, Son, although there was a nice moment at half-time when Liverpool Women did a lap of honour with the Championship trophy, the first time a promoted Liverpool side had been seen at Anfield since 1962.

Manchester City responded with a 5-0 win against Newcastle the following day, but then manager Pep Guardiola showed signs of the pressure he is under. "Everyone in this country supports Liverpool, the media and everyone," replied the City manager when asked by BeIn Sports if the title race was over? "Of course, because Liverpool has an incredible history in European competition, not in the Premier League – won one in 30 years. But it's no problem at all. The situation is what it is."

He really needs to get a Twitter account if he thinks everyone supports Liverpool. If a three-legged dog in an LFC collar lost a race to a greyhound it'd get 10,000 likes on there. As Klopp said in response, "Even here in Liverpool it's probably only 50 per cent!"

The players responded on the pitch with a hard-fought 2-1 midweek win against Stevie G's Aston Villa. Having lost 7-2 at Villa Park in 2020/21, the last thing Liverpool needed when trying to stay afloat in the title race was to ship an early goal so going 1-0 down to a scrappy Douglas Luiz effort after three minutes wasn't ideal.

It should never have stood. Ollie Watkins was offside in the first phase of play, but because Alisson saved his shot play continued and Luiz scored in the second phase. Ridiculously, had Ali let Watkins' shot go in VAR would have ruled it out for offside, meaning we're now in a parallel universe where goalkeepers might be better not saving shots if they think a striker is offside. And this at a ground where Roberto Firmino had a goal disallowed for an offside armpit.

Joel Matip and Virgil van Dijk were still making the point to referee Jon Moss after they combined for Liverpool's sixth-minute equaliser, another scrappy goal from an Alexander-Arnold free-kick. Sadio Mane and Danny Ings both headed chances over, but then Fabinho limped off clutching the back of his leg. Not what you want to see in FA Cup final week.

At least there was a winning goal to celebrate when Mane – LFC's April goal-of-the-month winner for his volley against Man City in the FA Cup semi-final – strained his neck to head a Diaz cross into the net before Alisson denied Ings with his umpteenth one-v-one save of the season.



"We have caused ourselves a problem with qualifying for all the finals so it is positive, but it is of course hard," said Klopp after being asked about the number of games his players were facing. "The mentality of the boys was outstanding – I loved it – and we had to dig deep at the end."

Academy striker Max Woltman signing a new contract was another positive, but the news was less pleasing for those of us in the Champions League final ticket ballot with only a 29.5 per cent chance of being successful for the 35,532 supporters who qualified to be in it.

With the FA Cup final up next, it feels like I'd been involved in more ballots than Len McCluskey this season and there was even the bonus of being able to get the train to Wembley this time, although just like the Carabao Cup final against Chelsea it was settled by the lottery of penalties.

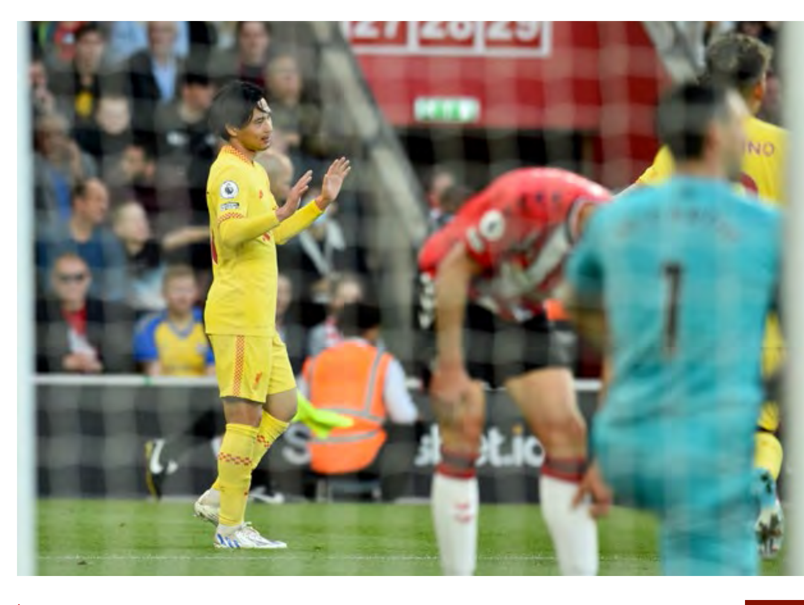
It was 150 years since the first FA Cup final had been played and, somewhat remarkably, there had never been a 0-0 draw at Wembley after extra-time until 2022. It was somewhat remarkable that it finished 0-0 as despite losing Salah and Van Dijk to injury the Reds should have had it won in 90 minutes, but only managed to get two of their 17 shots on target.

Luis Diaz was the best player on the pitch. He had an early shot partially blocked by Edouard Mendy then cleared off the line, hit a post and curled another effort wide. Marcos Alonso hit Alisson's crossbar, Andy Robertson hit Mendy's post and the sight and sound of the magnificent travelling Kop belting out *You'll Never Walk Alone* at full-time, half-time of extra-time and full-time of extra time (which is a lot of time) had Thiago Silva gesticulating at the Chelsea fans to respond by waving their plastic flags.

If you've not seen the FA Cup Winners special magazine we did yet then where have you been? Get it ordered, and in the meantime excuse me while I quote myself with an extract from it…

'Liverpool looked far more relaxed about penalties. While Thomas Tuchel was asking his players one-by-one who fancied taking a spot-kick, Klopp gave his already-decided penalty-takers a hug followed by a quick pep-talk before looking like the most relaxed man in the world as he laughed with Van Dijk, hugged Harvey Elliott and joked with Chelsea's nervous-looking German first-team coach Arno Michels.

'You would not have thought that the FA Cup – potentially Liverpool's 50th major honour and the second leg of a possible historic quadruple – was about to be decided in the most nerve-wracking, bottom-twitching, heart-racing manner of all. As *I Feel Fine* rang out again, Klopp was loving it!



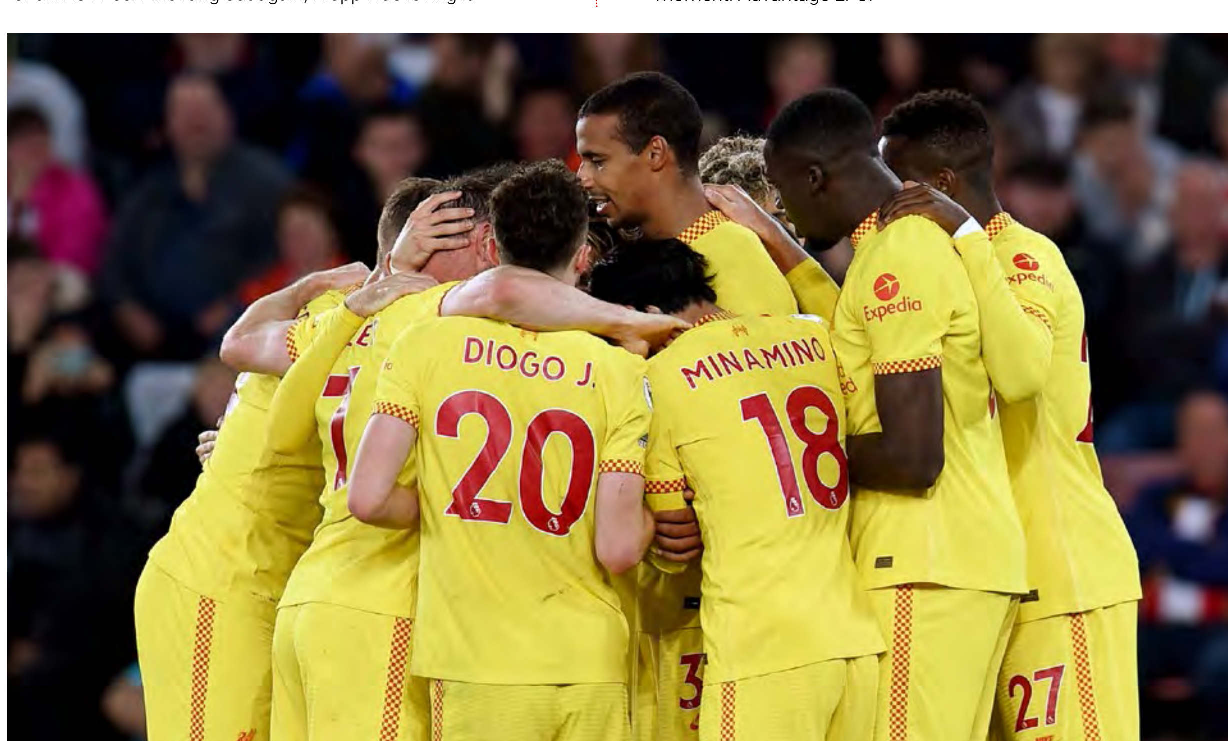
'Cesar Azpilicueta won both tosses and opted for Chelsea to take first at their end of Wembley. Wearing their 'lucky' yellow change strip, it was all set for Tuchel's men to end their FA Cup final losing streak, but after Alonso and James Milner netted the opening spot-kicks it all went a bit Pete Tong for the Chelsea captain when he hit the post.

'Thiago, Reece James, Firmino, Ross Barkley, Alexander-Arnold and Jorginho all converted, giving Mane – who spent the shoot-out pacing up and down behind his teammates on the half-way line – the opportunity to win it, but his Senegal international team-mate Mendy won the battle of minds and guessed right to make the save, leaving travelling Kopites with heads in hands.

'When Hakim Ziyech then put Chelsea ahead the pressure was on Diogo Jota, but he showed nerves of steel to net. Then the best goalkeeper in the world, Alisson Becker, plunged to his left to save brilliantly from Mason Mount. He celebrated by kneeling on the turf and pointing to the skies, perhaps thinking of his late father who had died in such tragic circumstances 14 months earlier.

'Liverpool supporters celebrated wildly and as Ali handed the ball to Kostas Tsimkias - the Reds goalkeeper handed the ball to all the penalty-takers to stop Mendy getting involved in any mind games – the sense of anticipation in the LFC end was bubbling. Tsimikas had never taken a penalty before so there was no way that Mendy could have prepared for such a moment. Advantage LFC.







'Our Greek Scouser stepped up, went the same way as Alan Kennedy in the 1984 European Cup final and with such simplicity the FA Cup was won. Kostas ran around like a headless chicken before being mobbed, as was Ali. The Chelsea end resembled a fire drill. Liverpool had won an eighth FA Cup. The Champions Wall needed another makeover...'

If you can't hear Dua Lipa's *One Kiss* in your head when you think of the post-match joy, are you even a Liverpool fan? The celebrations were brilliant – on the pitch, in the stands and in the dressing room, where the players danced around the FA Cup like it was a campfire.

"Unreal, to be honest," is how Alexander-Arnold replied when asked how it feels to have landed every trophy with his club by the age of just 23? "I was sat there today and last night thinking this is the only one I've got left now to complete the set and to do it is an amazing feeling. It's something that I've dreamed of and



it's something that not many players can say they have done, so to be able to do it with this amazing club and this amazing team is a special feeling for me."

The celebrations had barely subsided when it was off to Southampton for another midweek fixture in the Premier League, who had announced that Trent was in the running for Player and Young Player of the Year, Salah was also up for Player of the Year and Klopp for Manager of the Year. Thiago also landed the Standard Chartered player-of-the-month gong for April.

A much-changed Liverpool XI again conceded first, but Takumi Minamino fired home the equaliser and a looping Matip headed secured another three points to take the title-race down to game 38 of 38. Beat Wolves at Anfield and Man City would have to beat Aston Villa at the Etihad to finish top.

Which is ultimately what happened, but not before Liverpool put us through a gamut of emotions that makes you question if spending weekends standing in a field trying to photograph a great crested warbler or passing trains would have been better life-choices.

Pedro Neto's early goal was cancelled out by Mane, and when news filtered through that Matty Cash and then Philippe Coutinho had put Villa 2-0 up in Manchester, the mixture of tension and desperation for another Liverpool goal at Anfield was almost unbearable.

Salah got it in the 84th minute, but by then City had hit three in six minutes to remain top of the pile and there they stayed, despite a false alarm at Anfield of a ghost Villa goal before Andy Robbo made it 3-1.

For the second time in four seasons, Liverpool had missed out on the title by a point. Which hurt, but with Divock Origi heading for pastures new the post-match lap of appreciation turned into a fitting send off for the greatest Anfield cult-hero of all with the big Belgian presented with a framed Champions Wall among other mementos as his name rang out.

Salah was also handed another Golden Boot as the Premier League's leading goalscorer on 23 goals, albeit shared with Tottenham's favourite Son, and the Premier League Playmaker award for the most assists (13).

Alisson added another Golden Glove to his collection for the most clean-sheets (20) while the Golden Sambas (awarded by LFC fanzine *Red All Over the Land* to the fans' player and young player of the year) went to Salah and Ibrahima Konate, although COVID protocols meant they couldn't be presented on the day.

Hopefully that won't be the case in 12 months' time when Fabio Carvalho is trying to emulate Konate after it was announced that the Portuguese midfielder will move to Liverpool from Fulham on 1 July. If his form for Fulham is anything to go by, he's going to be fab to watch at Anfield.

And so to Paris for the 2022 Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid. Let's start with the good bits.

Travelling Kopites converged on France from every available



angle. Planes were packed, ferries full, the Eurostar rammed. The Chunnel was full of Reds, coach loads went via Lille, others headed to the French capital via Amsterdam and Brussels.

The pre-match party was immense as Kopites basked in the sunshine by the Eiffel Tower, sailed down the Seine, livened up the Louvre and turned the city redder than the Moulin Rouge. The sea of red at the Cours de Vincennes fan park, where the Lightning Seeds, John Power, Jamie Webster, A BOSS Night regulars and The Anfield Wrap entertained thousands, was truly astonishing.

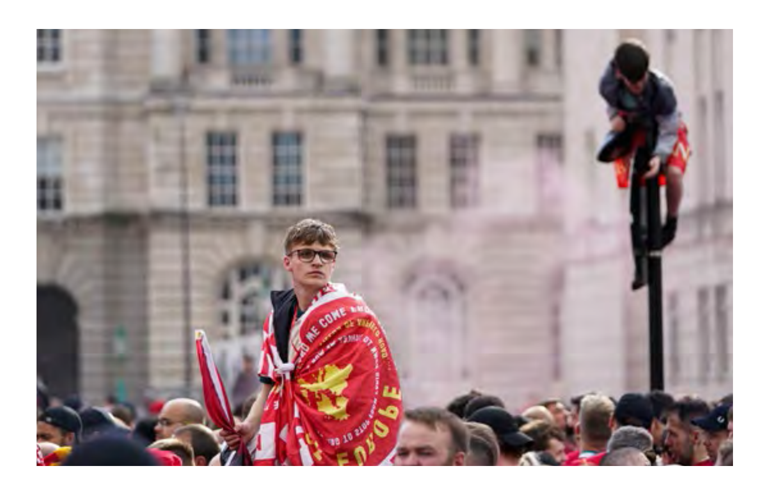
Unfortunately the whole thing, including the Reds' 1-0 defeat to Real Madrid, was overshadowed by the shambles in Saint-Denis. The three hours before the delayed kick-off outside the Stade de France was a horrific experience for all concerned and would have been much worse but for the outstanding behaviour of Liverpool supporters. Getting away from the stadium was also terrifying. As Thierry Henry put it on TV: "Trust me, you don't want to be in Saint-Denis."

Those of you who went through the ordeal don't need to relive it. Those in authority who caused the problems, behaved reprehensibly or played the blame game by mudslinging with lies and falsehood are an absolute disgrace.

Thankfully, the vast majority – including the world's press – saw what really happened with journalists such as French-speaking Dan Austin admirably leading the fight to ensure the truth is told and those responsible are held to account.

Liverpool FC, under the guidance of CEO Billy Hogan, also responded superbly by asking all who attended to document their experiences while the LFC Foundation compiled a list of mental health help advice lines and websites on the club website. Please don't suffer in silence if you are still affected by what happened, we're all on this journey together.

Congrats to Carlo Ancelotti and Real Madrid on their 1-0 win – Thibaut Courtois made the difference with saves from Mane and Salah – but the defeat feels somehow incidental against



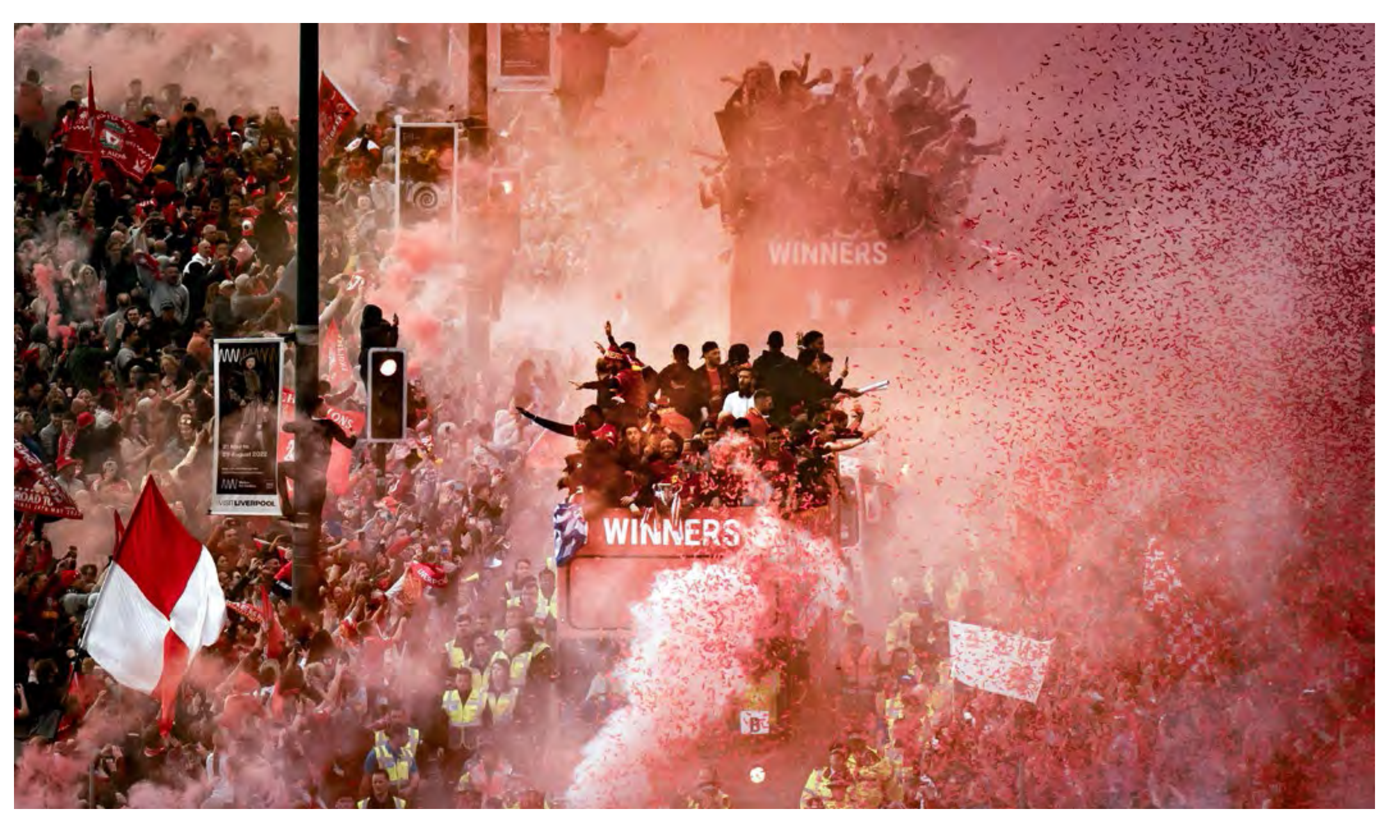
the backdrop of all the rest and despite all that happened in Saint-Denis there is no way that such a magnificent double trophy-winning season can end on a low for Liverpool. And it didn't.

Over 500,000 Reds lined the streets of Liverpool the following day for a homecoming parade that celebrated the achievements of the first team, women's team and our young players. The smoke-red air was filled with ticker-tape as Calvin Harris provided the tunes while Klopp and his players showed off the FA Cup and Carabao Cup amid a remarkable outpouring of support.

Sixty-three games. Three finals. Two trophies. 147 goals. 46 wins. Only four defeats. Two games short of an historic quadruple. It has been, without question, one of the greatest seasons to follow Liverpool FC during our entire 130-year history.

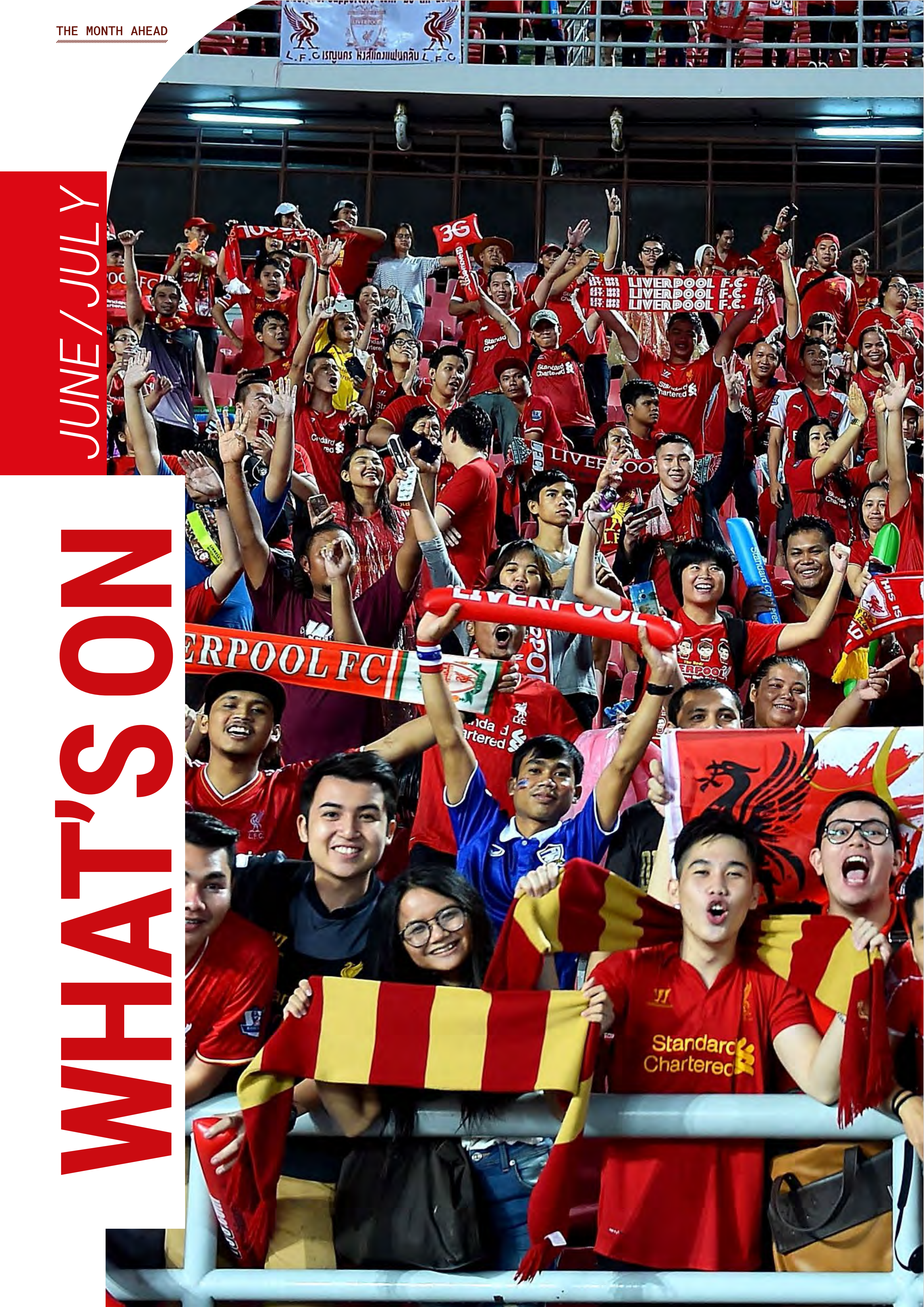
Anyone who tries to tell you differently doesn't get it. They haven't lived it. They never will. They have their own agendas. They can only imagine being us.

Enjoy the summer, and pre-season if the Reds visit your neck of the woods, as it won't be long until 30 July when we go again, this time to Leicester for the Community Shield between Liverpool and Manchester City, because that's what journey-hunting Reds do.



WHAT'S ON

JUNE / JULY



EASTERN PROMISE

Liverpool FC's 2022/23 pre-season will kick off with a match against Manchester United in Thailand. Jürgen Klopp's side visit the Rajamangala Stadium in Bangkok on Tuesday 12 July when they will battle it out for the Bangkok Century Cup.

Named 'The Match', the game will be the first stop on the Reds' summer tour and marks a return to the Rajamangala following a hugely successful 2015/16 pre-season tour. While in Thailand, the club will also take an active role in key local community projects and cultural activities.

Ben Latty, commercial director at LFC, said: "Pre-season tour is a vitally important time of year for our players to prepare for the upcoming season, and it provides a fantastic opportunity to meet with fans around the world.

"Since the start of the pandemic we've been unable to travel for pre-season and so we're extremely excited to be able to visit our supporters globally once again and compete in games like 'The Match'.

"This trip to Bangkok will be very special and we're really looking forward to having many of our supporters with us along the way."

Liverpool will then face Crystal Palace at the Singapore National Stadium on Friday 15 July with the Standard Chartered Singapore trophy up for grabs. The Reds previously visited Singapore for successful matches in 2001 and 2009, and also held an open training session there in 2011.

Meanwhile, Liverpool FC Women's star Rachel Furness will be representing Northern Ireland in the group stages of the Women's Euros in England in July. The Reds vice-captain's country will play all three of their group games at St Mary's, Southampton and play Norway on 7 July and Austria on 11 July before taking on England on 15 July.



JUNE/JULY

WHAT'S ON



ABSOLUTELY FABIO

Fabio Carvalho will officially become a Liverpool FC player on 1 July. The 19-year-old played a key role in Fulham's promotion back to the Premier League in 2021/22, scoring 10 goals and providing eight assists in 36 games as Marco Silva's side won the Championship title.

He had featured for the Cottagers in the top flight on four occasions in the previous season, marking his first Premier League start with a goal away at Southampton in May 2021.

Carvalho made his debut for Portugal U21s in March having previously represented England at youth level. He will discover when the Reds will meet his former club when the Premier League fixtures are revealed on Thursday 16 June.

BIRTHDAYS

Alan Hansen 67 on 13 June

Mo Salah 30 on 15 June

Jürgen Klopp 55 on 16 June

Jordan Henderson 32 on 17 June

Bjorn Tore Kvarme 50 on 17 June

Jason McAteer 51 on 18 June

Rachel Furness 34 on 19 June

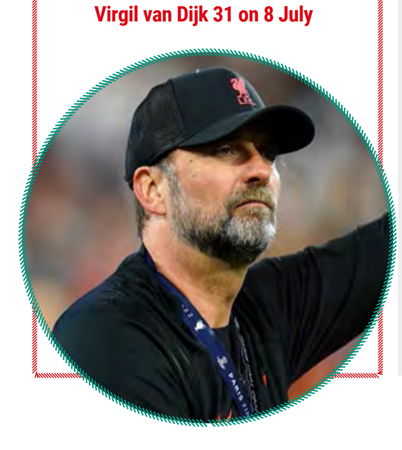
Luis Garcia 44 on 24 June

Craig Johnston 62 on 25 June

Jamie Redknapp 49 on 25 June

Megan Campbell 29 on 28 June

Virgil van Dijk 31 on 8 July



ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...



ANNIVERSARIES

7 years since Roberto Firmino joined the Reds on 24 June 2015.

11 years since Jordan Henderson signed from Sunderland on 9 June 2011.

13 years since John Achterberg was appointed goalkeeping coach on 9 June 2009.

19 years since striker Michael Owen became the youngest England man to reach 50 international caps on 11 June 2003.

38 years since Reds midfielder Graeme Souness left for Sampdoria on 12 June 1984.

55 years since goalkeeper Ray Clemence signed for the club on 24 June 1967.

And it's 35 years since winger John Barnes joined the Reds from Watford on 9 June 1987...

The Reds splashed out £900,000 to bring the young England ace to Anfield and it quickly proved to be bargain. 'Digger' joined forces with fellow new recruits Peter Beardsley and John Aldridge to form one of the club's most exciting forward lines.

He recalled: "I was completely convinced that Kenny Dalglish bought me to partner John Aldridge upfront. 'Kenny', I asked shortly after signing, 'where will I be playing?' Without a second's pause Kenny replied, 'Left-wing'. Kenny knew that Beardsley, a clever skilful support-striker, would soon be joining. I had thought my left-wing days were over!"

It took Barnes just nine minutes to create a goal for Aldridge on his Liverpool debut at Arsenal on Highbury on 15 August 1987. His Anfield debut against Oxford United the following month also stood out, with Dalglish saying afterwards: "Barnes did what we expected him to do. He made a goal, scored one, and entertained."

It would prove to be a match made in heaven. Over the next decade, Barnes played more than 400 games for Liverpool and produced more than a century of both goals and assists as he established himself as an Anfield great.



FANCY A

GAME?

CHALLENGE OTHER REDS

We have launched a new eGaming platform –and you can now sign up to challenge other Reds on EA SPORTS FIFA 22 and compete for fantastic prizes.

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A Rival account - it's quick and easy to register

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A PS4, PS5, Xbox Series S/X or Xbox One and an active online account (PlayStation Plus, Xbox Live) with a copy of EA SPORTS FIFA 22.

Only 64 players can compete in each tournament so register now to secure your place. Take a look at the upcoming tournaments and the prizes on offer.

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WALK ON

LIVERPOOL FC

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£74.95



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LFC NIKE MENS PRE-MATCH SHORT SLEEVE TOP 22/23
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LFC NIKE KIDS BLACK STRIKE SHORT SLEEVE TOP 22/23
£37.95



LFC NIKE MENS BLACK STRIKE TRACK JACKET 22/23
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LFC NIKE KIDS SIREN RED STRIKE SHORT SLEEVE TOP 22/23
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LFC NIKE MENS SIREN RED STRIKE DRILL TOP 22/23
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LFC NIKE MENS BLACK STRIKE SHORT 22/23
£32.95



NEIL MELLOR

Enjoy a little bit of a rest because when next season starts Liverpool will be competing for all the big trophies again

It was a memorable season for Liverpool Football Club, a season when the Reds competed for the biggest trophies against the biggest teams. That's where we want to be as Liverpool supporters and that's where Jürgen Klopp and his players are at.

Yes, we'd have loved to have won the Premier League and Champions League in addition to the FA Cup and Carabao Cup, but ultimately Liverpool are now one of the best sides in world football.

Most wins in a season. Most goals in a season. Three cup finals. Two trophies. A title-challenge that went down to the wire. It was absolutely brilliant to watch.

This is an era we'll be talking about in 20 years' time and beyond. Under Klopp, Liverpool have won the Premier League and Champions League. It isn't easy to win those competitions and the disappointment of losing to Real Madrid in Paris is still fresh, but sometimes in football you don't get what you deserve. The Champions League final was one of those games for Liverpool.

Four years ago in Kyiv, Liverpool were the underdogs against Real Madrid. This year I watched us and thought: we're better than them. It was disappointing not to win, but it shows the level we're at.



The hunger and desire to lift the biggest trophies will always be there and whether the players win them or not, the mentality at Liverpool is 'we love winning, we love celebrating with our fans, we have to go again'. That is all you can ask for.

Those celebrations included the incredible open-top bus parade through the city. It was unique and it was a good idea because it showed everyone the strong connection that the manager and players have with the supporters.

I look at different football clubs around the world and think they would love to have the connection we have at Liverpool. Our supporters absolutely love our manager and what he has given to our club, so the parade was a huge show of appreciation by people who love watching our team.

James Milner even said those scenes came into his thinking ahead of signing a new contract and it reinforced the reality that this is an amazing football club to be at. Why would anybody want to leave?

The desire to play for such a club can also attract new players and this season we saw Ibrahima Konate and Luis Diaz arrive at Anfield.

Konate was very good and he also pushed Joel Matip, who responded with one of his best seasons at Liverpool. Playing alongside Virgil van Dijk – the best centre-half in world football – helped Konate to settle and he grew as the season went on with the manager trusting him to start the Champions League final, a big call to make. He looks like he'll be a big player for Liverpool and his goals from set-pieces later on during the campaign was also an asset. Our defenders scored 14 goals – 11 in the Premier League – this season and that is an important contribution.

Liverpool supporters took to Konate and it's fair to say everyone took to Luis Diaz too. He's a player that makes you think: cor, where's he come from, what a player this lad is.

Diaz reminds me of Luis Suarez in terms of being a South American with determination, desire, aggression and bravery. He works hard to create, he'll be back at left-back making tackles, he's got quality and his goal at Brighton was a stand-out moment of bravery.

His equaliser against Spurs at Anfield also showed his connection with the Kop and there are exciting times ahead watching him. Overall, he played a lot of football – more games than Mo Salah and Sadio Mane – and had to settle into a new league, a new country, a new language and a new team with a specific identity. To adapt so quickly tells me how intelligent Luis Diaz is as a footballer and he will only get better.

Thoughts will soon turn to next season and, with Erling Haaland already signed, it will once again be Manchester City who are Liverpool's main rivals. City aren't used to playing with a striker so how Haaland fits in will be interesting to see, but irrespective of his impact this Liverpool side will be pushing them all the way.

In the meantime, Liverpool supporters can enjoy the summer knowing this team will compete for everything again and shouldn't spend time worrying if players might leave. The days of Suarez or Philippe Coutinho wanting to leave are over. If Jürgen Klopp wants to keep a player, he will keep that player. It's that simple.

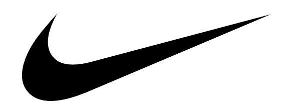
So enjoy a little bit of a rest because when next season starts Liverpool will be competing for all the big trophies again and that's an exciting prospect.

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